

RUSSIAN – CHINESE RELATIONS AND NORTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY:
1991-2009

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ABSTRACT

**RUSSIAN – CHINESE RELATIONS AND NORTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY:
1991-2009**

Yurdakul, Derya
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This thesis aims at discussing the nature of relations between Russia and China and the Northeast Asian security during the post-Soviet era. The research question is whether Russia and Northeast Asian countries still pursue ideological policies after post-Cold War era. In this respect, the thesis argues that these countries act pragmatically instead of ideologically in the post-Cold War era. This has resulted in a rapprochement between communist China and post-Soviet Russia in the post-Soviet era. Moreover, ideological differences among any regional states do not constitute the basis of regional conflicts. It is rather North Korea's nuclear program that has become the main regional security threat.

The thesis is composed of six chapters. After the introductory chapter, the second chapter examines Russian-Chinese bilateral relations. The following three chapters discuss Russian-Chinese relations concerning the roles of Japan, South Korea and North Korea respectively in the Northeast Asian security. The last chapter is the conclusion.

Key Words: Russia, China, Northeast Asia, Regional Security, Post-Cold War Era.

ÖZ

RUSYA-ÇİN İLİŞKİLERİ VE KUZEYDOĞU ASYA GÜVENLİĞİ: 1991-2009

Yurdakul, Derya
Yüksek Lisans, Avrasya Çalışmaları
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Bu tez Sovyet sonrası dönemde Çin-Rusya ilişkilerinin ve Kuzeydoğu Asya ülkeleri güvenliğinin niteliklerini tartışmayı amaçlamıştır. Araştırma sorusu Soğuk Savaş sonrasında Rusya'nın ve Kuzeydoğu Asya ülkelerinin hala ideolojik politikaları takip edip etmedikleridir. Bu bakımdan, bu tez Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde bu ülkelerin ideolojik olarak davranmak yerine, pragmatik olarak hareket ettiklerini iddia etmektedir. Bu, Komünist Çin ve Sovyet sonrası Rusya arasında bir yakınlaşma sonucunu doğurmuştur. Ayrıca, bölge devletleri arasındaki ideolojik farklılıklar bölgesel çatışmaların temelini oluşturmamaktadır. Temel bölgesel güvenlik sorunu Kuzey Kore'nin nükleer programıdır.

Bu tez altı bölümden oluşmaktadır. Giriş bölümünden sonra, ikinci bölüm Rus-Çin ikili ilişkilerini incelemektedir. Sonraki üç bölüm Rus-Çin ilişkilerini Japonya, Güney Kore ve Kuzey Kore'nin Kuzeydoğu Asya güvenliğindeki rollerini ayrı ayrı dikkate alarak tartışmaktadır. Son kısım sonuç bölümünden oluşmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rusya, Çin, Kuzeydoğu Asya, Bölgesel Güvenlik, Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönem.

To My Mother and Father

Annem ve Babama

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, foreign policies of Russia, China and other Northeast Asian countries, which are Japan, South Korea and North Korea, will be examined. As we all know, ideological differences were important during the Cold War era for countries' foreign policies. The main question is following the collapse of the Soviet Union, whether ideology still plays a role in shaping their foreign policies. In this thesis, it will be observed that these countries act pragmatically instead of acting ideologically during the post-Cold War era.

This thesis has been discussed in the literature widely. The subject has been examined by a number of writers such as Michael Baron, Ariel Cohen, Yong Deng, Jiang Li, Lowel Dittmer, Peter Ferdinand and Robert Kagan. Most of the writers observed that there is a new stage in relations between Russia and China and their foreign policies in Northeast Asia in the post-Cold War era. Cold War is an ideological division of countries which fling aside their historical animosity and conflicts. The main reason of conflict between the two sides is this ideological difference. Countries which have the same ideology assemble, follow a common policy, cooperate with each other and even live together under a government like the Soviet Union. These countries blanket antagonisms which existed between them. In this context, during the post-Cold War era, it is supposed that they bring

to light old antagonisms and conflicts and follow policies according to this. However, it is observed that the situation is not like this in Northeast Asia. On this account, Russia, China, Japan, South Korea and North Korea will be analyzed in this thesis.



Figure 1 The Northeast Asia Region
Source: http://www.milnet.com/pentagon/nonprolf/ne_asia.gif

I argue that historical antagonisms certainly pose an obstacle to having close relations with each other. On the other hand, during the post-Cold War era, the Northeast Asian countries' and Russia's priority policy is standing up for their own interests. That is to say, these countries act pragmatically in international arena. The best example of this argument is rapprochement between China and South Korea that will also be analyzed in this thesis.

The world has experienced important changes since the end of the Cold War. Northeast Asia has come up as a prominent region in this new world system. Over the course of the 1990s, rising powers emerged in the region such as China and Japan. At the beginning of the new millennium, Northeast Asia has emerged as one of the most likely theaters of conflicted regions such as Taiwan Strait and Korean Peninsula among major powers.¹ In order to understand the dynamics of Northeast Asia during the post-Cold War era, it is necessary to analyze major players in the region and consider the effect of critical issues on regional security. Furthermore, in order to evaluate situation of a region, it is crucial to consider partnerships among major powers, balance of power and national interests of regional countries. This thesis will start with an overview of relations between Russia and China in the post-Cold War world and will focus on diplomatic, military and economic relations, and regional policy of Russia and China. In addition, mutual relations of these two countries with Japan, North Korea and

¹ Quansheng Zhao, "Asian-Pacific International Relations in the 21st Century", *Future Trends in East Asian International Relations*, Quansheng Zhao (ed.), London, Taylor & Francis, July 2002, p.239

South Korea and positions of these three countries in Northeast Asian security will be examined. This study is chronologically limited to the period since the end of the Cold War.

Relations between Russia and China are crucial and strategically interesting in terms of economic development and security of Northeast Asia. In spite of the fact that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of the right-wing Yeltsin dismayed China, it quickly recognized the Russian Federation and the newly independent republics.² Relations between Russia and China are at the highest point in their whole history. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, relations between the two countries entered into a period of building strategic partnership. Starting with foundation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2001, Russian and Chinese governments agreed to enhance their cooperation in strategic, military and economic fields. 2006 was called ‘the year of Russia’ in China and 2007 was ‘the year of China’ in Russia. As Peter Ferdinand says, “these projects mark an attempt to widen popular understanding in each country of the other, and also to develop wider business networks with an interest in developing trade.”³

Russia and Northeast Asian countries face a number of critical security challenges. These challenges heighten political tensions and increase territorial

² Lowell Dittmer, “The Sino-Japanese-Russian Triangle”, *Journal of Chinese Political Sciences*, Vol.10, No.1, April 2005, p.12

³ Peter Ferdinand, “Russia and China: Converging Responses to Globalization”, *International Affairs*, Vol.83, No.4, 2007, p.655

disputes. China has extremely increased its own economic and political effect in Northeast Asia after almost 30 years of economic reform effort. Russia wants to protect its status as a regional power. For this aim, it is trying to have favorable conditions to have advanced relations with Northeast Asia. Therefore, it is interested in taking place in the resolution of crucial security issues in Northeast Asia.

The following chapters of this study will analyze Japan's, North Korea's and South Korea's foreign policies in Northeast Asia. These chapters of the study will focus more upon these three countries' security policies in the region and their bilateral relations with Russia and China.

Considering security of Northeast Asia, it would evidently be a mistake to relegate Japan to a low position. Japan has increased its economic power, technological capabilities and diplomatic influence. Japan is considered as the main regional counterweight to China and indispensable partner in America's strategy of balancing China.⁴ It is a country called an economic giant, technological super power and medium-sized military power. In the third chapter of the study, the target is explaining the question of how to characterize Japan's foreign policy in the region. This chapter also includes Japan's bilateral relations with Russia and China. Relations between Russia and Japan have been moving forward in terms of the intensity of contacts. Japan's investment is extremely

⁴ Aurelia George Mulgan, "Why Japan Still Matters", *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol.12, No.2, 2005, p.104

crucial for the devastated economy of Russia. And for Japan, Russia is not a threat anymore. The existence of new threats in the world in recent years caused a change in relations between Russia and Japan. The recent changes in the world and the emergence of new challenges and threats require an advanced feature of cooperation between Russia and Japan in the international arena.⁵ On the other hand, they have some mutual problems which are still waiting to be resolved such as Kuril Islands issue.

As for Japan's relations with China, several issues such as historical mutual antipathy, territorial disputes, rise of China's military power, Taiwan issue and alliance between the United States and Japan shape relations between the two countries. Although China is still a communist country, it is observed that basis of their conflicts are not ideological. Their common history is not so pleasant for them. Traumatic memories in their common history sometimes cause emotional reactions in their foreign policy. Even though Japan's invasion has left a deep scar in Chinese people's memories, they endeavour to solve their mutual problems in order to achieve their economic and social targets and to keep the regional stability.

In the fourth chapter, South Korea's foreign policy and its bilateral relations with Russia and China will be held in detail. Korean reunification issue will be held in this part, too. The Cold War postponed the normalization of relations between Russia and South Korea. Their political dialogue and foreign

⁵ V. Saplin, "Russia-Japan: How to End Relations' Asymmetry?", *International Affairs: A Russian Journal of World Politics, Diplomacy & International Relations*, Vol.53, No.4, 2007, p.101

policy interaction currently increased. Today, Russia gained a major independent player role in the Korean Peninsula issue by having close relations with both South Korea and North Korea. Normalization process and cooperation between Russia and South Korea will be analyzed in this chapter.

Moreover, importance of Korean Peninsula for China and China's foreign policy among South Korea will be also examined in the fourth chapter. While China and South Korea were the two opposite sides in the Korean Peninsula during the Cold War era, they have currently developed partnership with each other. Today, South Korea is vital for China because of South Korean position as a technology provider for China. As for South Korea, having close relations with China is essential to enable to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue.

The fifth chapter of the thesis describes North Korea's foreign policy. It will examine North Korea's a dangerous, isolated and unpredictable position that causes the six-party talks continue to fluctuate between hope and confusion.⁶ This chapter will be followed by a review of its relations with Russia and China. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia altered its position from diplomatic guarantor and economic supporter of North Korea to receiver of economic support from South Korea. Until the beginning of the 21st century, Russia held a passive position even though it supported all attempts for peace and security in Korean Peninsula. With the Putin administration, relations between

⁶ Ian Bremmer, Choi Sung-hong, Yoriko Kawaguchi, "A New Forum for Peace", *The National Interest*, No.82, Winter 2005/06, p.107

Russia and North Korea improved. Although Russia helped North Korea to reduce its dependence on China, it has not enough influence in the region. Why Russia altered its policy in 2000 and became more active will also be evaluated in this part. As to China, North Korea started to feel isolated in the context of China's connection with the capitalist world. This part will argue traditional Chinese aims and their challenge in dealing with North Korea.

Finally, in this thesis, I will take a fresh look at ties between Russia and China and their influence in Northeast Asia. I will analyze substantial interests of the countries in the region in the post-Cold War era. This study will assess how Russia's and China's foreign policies and mutual relations both with each other and with Japan, South Korea and North Korea affect Northeast Asian security. It will also describe current problems in the region and these countries' views about these issues. The thesis will conclude these countries shape their foreign policies basically by taking into consideration their economic and political benefits. In order to reach their goals, they try to protect Northeast Asian security within a stable global framework.

CHAPTER 2

RUSSIAN – CHINESE BILATERAL RELATIONS

Today, China is a rising economic and geopolitical giant. China seems not to stay only as an economic and commercial power. It is also becoming a military power. As for Russia, its military power, which possesses nuclear weapons and a huge army with millions of soldiers and developed new weapons such as jet fighters and submarines, is indisputable. In addition, it has an economic growth which has been mostly thanks to oil and gas Russia possesses. These two important powers' relations with each other influence not only the region surrounding them but also the world.

The relationship between China and Russia showed a good momentum of growth in recent years. "Perhaps the most important factors shaping China and Russia's approaches to their relationship are their respective judgments as to how best to achieve their great power goal."⁷ Their relationship is based on equality, mutual trust and respect.⁸ Their mutual political trust, economic and military cooperation have developed. They have tried to solve all the problems between them to strengthen bilateral ties. As major powers in the world and permanent

⁷ Yong Deng, "Remolding Great Power Politics: China's Strategic Partnerships with Russia, the European Union, and India", *The Journal of State Studies*, Vol.30, No.4-5, August- October 2007, p.880

⁸ Paradorn Rangsimaporn, "Russian Elite Perceptions of the Russo-Chinese 'Strategic Partnership' (1996-2001)", *Slovo*, Vol.18, No.2, Autumn 2006, p.140

members of the United Nations Security Council, their cooperation and policy towards the third actors are important. Strategic partnership between the two countries is crucial to protect their common interests and promote common prosperity. Their strengthened cooperation not only benefits both countries, but also helps to protect world peace, security and development.

It is obvious that there are problems in the relations between Russia and China. However, they have tried to solve these problems by cooperation. The importance of their relationship is determined by several considerations such as having common aims and shared concerns, the need of stability in international environment for economic development. Following the end of the Cold War, some events have shaped mutual relations between Russia and China such as the combat against terrorism, the nuclear problems of North Korea, and the energy security problems.

Today, great powers' relations are determined by cooperations and competitions. To understand the relationship between Russia and China, following research objectives need to be studied:

- (1) assessing how they have developed their diplomatic relations
- (2) analyzing whether there is a growth in their military relations
- (3) examining economic relations between the two countries

Russia and China gain each other mutual support in main issues such as national sovereignty, territorial integrity and security.⁹ The 1990s were remarkable for the extent of accord between Russian and Chinese positions on a number of domestic and international issues.¹⁰ We often see Russia on the China's side on such matters as Taiwan and Tibet. Furthermore, China supports Russia on Chechnya issue. In addition, both Russia and China are against Western intervention about democracy and human rights. Thus, they support each other about these issues in international area. On the other hand, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the sides of the Cold War started to share several common aims. Economic and political integration became one of these crucial targets. Most of the Americans and Europeans believed China and Russia were on a path toward liberalism, following the political crackdown that began in Tiananmen Square in 1989 and disturbing signs of instability in Russia after 1993.¹¹

As to military relations between Russia and China, they have also strengthened. Founding of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, following a policy against common threats under it, and military exercises called Peace

⁹ N.A., "Roundup: Sino-Russian Relations See Steady Development", http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200506/30/eng20050630_193316.html (People's Daily Online), 30 June 2005

¹⁰ Bobo Lo, *Axis Of Convenience: Moscow, Beijing, and The New Geopolitics*, London & Washington, D.C., Chatham House &Brookings Institution Press, p.31

¹¹ Robert Kagan, *The Return Of History and the End of Dreams*, Knoph Publishing Group, 29 April 2008, p.5

Mission 2005 and Peace Mission 2007 are some of the demonstrations of their growing military cooperation.

Economic relationship between Russia and China has become one of the crucial points for their bilateral relations. Russia and China have decided to boost their bilateral trade volume to 80 billion dollars by 2010.¹² They have also built consensus on developing investments and cooperation between them.

2.1 Diplomatic Relations

Traditionally, the relationship between Russia and China has been based on the need to follow a policy against regional common threats and the necessity for mutual coexistence. What Russia and China want today is what great powers have always wanted: to keep stability and maintain their influence in the region and to exclude the effect of other great powers. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the relationship between Russia and China had a significant transformation. In spite of China's anxiety about the collapse of the Soviet Union, China quickly recognized the Russian Federation and the newly independent post-Soviet republics. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia and China developed their diplomatic contacts.

¹² N.A., "Roundup: Sino-Russian Relations See Steady Development", http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200506/30/eng20050630_193316.html (People's Daily Online), 30 June 2005

In the beginning of the post-Cold War era, China was alarmed and deeply fearful that a fully Westernized Russia would further isolate it.¹³ The new Russian foreign policy with President Boris Yeltsin left the door open to normalize Russia's mutual relations with China. In 1992, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Chinese President Jiang Zemin signed a joint declaration in China. They declared that Russia and China would not let systemic or ideological contrasts become a handicap for the development of their relationship. In 1994, when Jiang Zemin visited Russia, the two leaders built a 'constructive partnership'.¹⁴ Following this improvement, Boris Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin signed a joint statement in 1996 in China and announced their intention to develop a "strategic partnership of equality, mutual confidence, and mutual coordination toward the twenty-first century".¹⁵ After both of the partnership ideas were first proposed by Boris Yeltsin respectively in 1994 and 1996, his Chinese counterpart, President Jiang Zemin, immediately embraced them.¹⁶

On the 16th of July 2001, Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness

¹³ Yong Deng, "Remolding Great Power Politics: China's Strategic Partnerships with Russia, the European Union, and India", *The Journal of State Studies*, Vol.30, No.4-5, August- October 2007, p.867

¹⁴ Jeanne L. Wilson, "Strategic Partners Russian-Chinese Relations and the July 2001 Friendship Treaty", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol.49, No.3, May/June 2002, p.3

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.3

¹⁶ Yong Deng, "Remolding Great Power Politics: China's Strategic Partnerships with Russia, the European Union, and India", *The Journal of State Studies*, Vol.30, No.4-5, August- October 2007, p.868

and Co-operation. Today, their cooperation including military sales, joint military research and development, common diplomatic positions (in issues such as Taiwan), non-military trade, and the settlement of border issues, to a large extent, was formally codified in the 2001 Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Co-operation.¹⁷ As Jane L. Wilson specifies, “with respect to international issues, it affirms international law, preserving the global strategic balance and stability, nuclear disarmament, and strengthening the United Nations.”¹⁸ According to the Treaty, “if a threat of aggression arises, the two sides will immediately make contact with each other and hold consultations in order to eliminate the emerging threat.”¹⁹ The Treaty covers these crucial areas of cooperation: demarcation of the two countries’ long-disputed 4,300 km border; arms sales and technology transfers; energy and raw materials supply.²⁰

In spite of cooperation between China and Russia, the competition between them is also inevitable. Actually, China’s increasing political and economic influence in Asia causes concerns Russia. Russia is afraid of China’s rise and seeing its domination in the future. It is also worries about Chinese military intentions. Because of overpopulation and resource shortfall in China, the

¹⁷ Herman Pirchner Jr., “The Uncertain Future: Sino-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century”, *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol.16, No.4, Fall 2008, p.310

¹⁸ Jeanne L. Wilson, “Strategic Partners Russian-Chinese Relations and the July 2001 Friendship Treaty”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol.49, No.3, May/June 2002, p.4

¹⁹ Jiang Li, “Friendship Pact: a New Stage in Sino-Russian Relations”, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2001/Jul/16355.htm>, 20 July 2001, emphasis original

²⁰ Ariel Cohen, “The Russia-China Friendship and Cooperation Treaty: A Strategic Shift in Eurasia?”, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasia/BG1459.cfm>, 18 July 2001

Chinese might follow a policy to find more habitable territory which has energy resources such as Russia. In spite of such concerns, Russia sees the United States' influence around Russia as more threatening than China's influence. So, Russia prefers to be a strategic partner with China to balance the United States' power over the region. Russian people are optimistic about the future of their relations with China. After the ideal of 'good neighbor, good partner and good friend' was accepted by the Russian administration, it became a common view of Russian people.²¹

As to China, Zbigniew Brzezinski says in his book called "The Grand Chessboard" that "being more populous, more industrious, more innovative, more dynamic, and harboring some potential territorial designs on Russia, China would inevitably consign Russia to the status of a junior partner."²² In my opinion, China wants to be in an equal position with Russia. China does not want to see Russia become too powerful or too weak, however, it wants Russia to "take its proper place in the international system" by acting as a realistic actor able to maintain some distance from the United States and not behaving as a junior partner of it.²³

²¹ Jiang Li, "Friendship Pact: a New Stage in Sino-Russian Relations", <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2001/Jul/16355.htm>, 20 July 2001, emphasis original

²² Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostategic Imperatives*, New York, Basic Books, 1997, p.117

²³ Christopher Marsh, "Russia Plays the China Card", *The National Interest*, No.92, November / December 2007, p.72, emphasis original

A peaceful environment is crucial for both Russia and China to implement their domestic reforms and economic development.²⁴ The Treaty built strategic partnership between Russia and China. Even though both of the two countries declared that the Treaty is not against any third country, one of its aims is to offset a perceived United States hegemonism. However, the main goal of the Treaty is to enhance the strategic relations between China and Russia and to provide a basis for world peace and stability.²⁵

The common point for China and Russia was communism before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Because of this, the common concern of the two countries is the Western intervention about democracy. Today, Russia and China are blamed to be among challengers by the West. Therefore, they support each other in domestic issues. From Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Fang Ning's words show this unpleasant situation:

Western democracy is like going to a restaurant and choosing whether you want a French, Italian or German chef who will decide on your behalf what is on the menu. With Chinese democracy we always have the same chef – the Communist Party – but we will increasingly get to choose which dishes he cooks.²⁶

In addition, both Russia and China would like to cooperate in certain key international institutions. They decide to support each other's participation in

²⁴ Jiang Li, "Friendship Pact: a New Stage in Sino-Russian Relations", <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2001/Jul/16355.htm>, 20 July 2001

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Mark Leonard, *What Does China Think?*, London, HarperCollins Publishers, 2008, p.51

institutions of which the other one is already a member. This support was pledged by the two countries in Article 17 of the 2001 Friendship Treaty:

The contracting parties shall conduct cooperation in world financial institutions, economic organizations and forums, and in line with the rules and regulations of the above-mentioned institutions, organizations and forums, make efforts to promote the participation of a contracting party in the above-mentioned institutions of which the other contracting party is already a member (or member state).²⁷

2.2 Military Relations

Historically, Russia's and China's proximity and common interests have caused recurrent conflicts. Today, Russia is afraid of China's increasing economic growth, demographic dynamics and its growing influence in Asian countries. It does not want to see China as the most dominant country in the region. However, as it was mentioned before, today, the United States is more threatening than China for Russia. Taking into consideration Russia's and China's dissatisfaction about the long-lasting presence of the United States in Central Asia, it is not surprising that they started to cooperate against external interventions and common threats in the region.

Among all the five nuclear powers, China keeps its nuclear weapons in the least operationally ready stage. China learned one lesson from the Soviet Union: The massive buildup of nuclear weaponry diminished its security rather than

²⁷ From the English translation of the treaty published at the website of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs at www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/dozys/gjlb/3220/3221/t16730.htm (accessed 18 Aug. 2004), quoted in, Yong Deng, "Remolding Great Power Politics: China's Strategic Partnerships with Russia, the European Union, and India", *The Journal of State Studies*, Vol.30, No.4-5, August- October 2007, p.885

enhanced it.²⁸ Although China has the capability of modernizing the nuclear arsenal, it seems less enthusiastic than France and the United Kingdom, which recently announced plans for improving their nuclear forces.

Owing to the fact that the Russian economic downturn deepened throughout the 1990s, the military-industrial complex became dependent on foreign sales. Russia has been the leading supplier of advanced weaponry to China. Because of the fact that the West restricted some technologies and systems to China, it was seeking these technologies from Russia. China, which uses old technology, has been a major importer country of Russian military products. For Moscow, the Chinese arms market has become a primary source of foreign revenue, in turn aimed at the modernization of its own armed forces.²⁹ “Chinese purchases of Russian weaponry weighed heavily in the composition of trade throughout the 1990s.”³⁰ In 1996 China and Russia signed a bilateral defense cooperation pact. The United States and European countries started to worry about these weapon sales, the military balance in East Asia and Chinese threat. China’s army has largely used Russian exports of weapons and military technologies. The turning point of military relationship between China and Russia is the Treaty of Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation. This agreement opens the door

²⁸ Kishore Mahbubani, *The New Asian Hemisphere*, New York, Public Affairs, 2008, p.81

²⁹ Andrei Shoumikhin, “Sino-Russian Relations”, <http://www.nipp.org/Adobe/Regional%20Web/December%202004%20webpage.pdf> (National Institute for Public Policy), December 2004, p.3

³⁰ Lowell Dittmer, “The Sino-Japanese-Russian Triangle”, *Journal of Chinese Political Sciences*, Vol.10, No.1, April 2005, p.16

to wide-ranging cooperation between Russia and China, with joined actions to counterbalance American 'hegemony,' arms and technology transfers by Russia and the demarcation of their long-disputed border.³¹

Russia and China still have some problems in their economic cooperation area, however they do not have such problems in their political and military cooperation. As Alexandr Nemets says, "Russia and China are moving towards a 'multi-polar world' in which China and Russia would be dominant players."³² They pursue crucial aims. They support each other in international area to achieve these aims, and follow the same policy towards international issues. Russia and China considers each other as their "strategic rear", therefore, they are willing to support each other's security interests.³³ NATO enlargement to the East, Chechen issue and Islamic extremism in Central Asia are threats to Russia. Taiwan issue and the United States' predominance in the post-Cold War era are threats to China. Russia is also against any possible form of Taiwan's independence. "It has stated that 'there is only one China' and that Taiwan is China's 'internal affair,' while Beijing has expressed unequivocal support for Russia's strong-arm tactics in

³¹ Max Verbitz, "Russian-Chinese Military Cooperation: Can a Bear Trust a Dragon?", *Perspective*, Vol.16, No.3, <http://www.bu.edu/iscip/vol16/verbitz.html> (Boston University), May 2006, emphasis original

³² Alexandr Nemets, "Russia, China Solidify Disturbing Alliance", <http://archive.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2006/5/31/123614.shtml>, 31 May 2006, emphasis original

³³ Ovchinnikov, "No Need to Fear the Chinese Tiger", quoted in, Ariel Cohen, "The Russia-China Friendship and Cooperation Treaty: A Strategic Shift in Eurasia?", <http://www.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasia/BG1459.cfm>, 18 July 2001, emphasis original

Chechnya.”³⁴ China continues to pursue unlimited access to Central Asian energy resources. It would like to involve the entire Central Asia in Shanghai Cooperation Organization and eliminate the military presence of the United States and NATO in this region. Regarding Central Asia, Russia has the same target.

As Michael J. Baron expresses, “China is the only major country in the world that is currently undertaking a major military expansion.”³⁵ This situation is alarming for the United States and Europe, due to the fact that they decreased their military budgets. Even though Russia is in a co-operation with China, it has also concerns about this growth. China wants to build a first-rate military force³⁶ and it would like to show its dominant economic power in Asia.

Between August 18-25 2005, Russia and China participated in their first ever bilateral military exercises, which are called as Peace Mission 2005. In August 9-17 2007 Peace Mission 2007 was held by them. These exercises were symbols of their growing cooperation. In addition, because of the fact that they would like to balance the United States’ power in the region, they wanted to show their cooperation by these military exercises. These military exercises included land, sea and air exercises. There was some of Russia’s most advanced military

³⁴ Robert J. Saiget, "China, Russia Beef Up Cooperation on Ethnic Separatism, Taiwan, Terrorism," Agence France-Press, Hong Kong, November 18, 2000, as reported by World News Connection, FBIS-CHI-2000-1118, quoted in, Ariel Cohen, “The Russia-China Friendship and Cooperation Treaty: A Strategic Shift in Eurasia?”, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasia/BG1459.cfm>, 18 July 2001, emphasis original

³⁵ Michael J. Baron, “China’s Strategic Modernization: The Russian Connection”, *Parameters*, <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/01winter/barron.htm>, Winter 2001

³⁶ Ibid.

equipment in Peace Mission 2005. During the exercises, Russia was able to display its long-range bombers that hold the capability of carrying cruise missiles and nuclear weapons across far distances; long-range bombers are a crucial component for China's army, and the purchase of these aircraft would enhance China's military capabilities.³⁷

In addition, these military exercises allowed Russia to earn more currency from arms sales. However, these large-scale joint military maneuvers demonstrated that military cooperation between Russia and China far surpassed the weapon trade activity. Furthermore, military cooperation between the two countries provides the cornerstone in bilateral relations.³⁸

These military activities show not only to the United States and the West but also to Taiwan and eastern countries that cooperation between Russia and China is growing. With these exercises, both Russia and China could achieve their political purposes. Because, China could show Taiwan that it has a huge military capability with Russia. Russia also could show the United States and the West that the military presence of the United States in Central Asia does not mean that the Russian military is dormant.

³⁷ Yevgeny Bendersky, and Erich Marquardt, "The Significance of Sino-Russian Military Exercises", http://www.pinr.com/report.php?ac=view_report&report_id=366, 14 September 2005

³⁸ Alexandr Nemets, "Russia, China Solidify Disturbing Alliance", <http://archive.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2006/5/31/123614.shtml>, 31 May 2006

2.3 Economic Relations

Over 30 years have passed since China started economic transformation. Almost two decades have passed since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Economic developments in Russia and in China are completely different. Russia has tried to achieve the introduction of a capitalist market economy in addition to political democratization. However, China has insisted of keeping socialism while entering to market economy. It is obvious that China is more industrialized in comparison with Russia.

In spite of their mutual long border and complementary resource endowments, the extent of economic interaction between China and Russia was rather limited in the last century.³⁹ There were some political and geographical factors which limited economic relations between Russia and China. Today, their economic relationship is highly intense because of their geographic proximity and economic compatibility. The economies of two countries can be linked through trade, investment, and labor migration.⁴⁰ Trade is more dominant among these three aspects in the Russian-Chinese economic relationship. China and Russia

³⁹ Richard Lotspeich, "Perspectives on the Economic Relations Between China and Russia", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol.36, No.1, 2006, p.48

⁴⁰ N.A., "Economic Relations between China and Russia: Development and Potential", http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=events.event_summary&event_id=104548 (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars), 07 February 2005

decided to raise official bilateral trade volume from \$60 billion to \$80 billion by 2010.⁴¹ Today, Russia is one of the main trade partners of China.

The collapse of the Soviet Union is the turning point for the current economic relations between them. In the 1990s, economic relations between Russia and China started to develop because of changes in the international political environment. Former Soviet countries entered to the process of economic transition. In this process, Russia and China have become more integrated with each other and with the world economy.

Both Russia and China endeavour to develop their own economies. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, they started to effort to promote development of trade and economic cooperation between them. They composed a solid legal base for their economic relationship.

It includes key intergovernmental agreements on such topics as: trade and economic co-operation; encouragement of investment and the mutual protection of investment; co-operation in science and technology; avoidance of duplicate taxation and the prevention of income tax evasion; co-operation and mutual help in customs; joint initiatives on protection of intellectual property, etc.⁴²

During the Soviet time, the ideological and international strategic concerns used to extremely affect the economic relationship between Russia and China.

⁴¹ N.A., "Vast Space for Sino-Russian Economic, Trade Ties", http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200703/29/eng20070329_362183.html (People's Daily Online), 29 March 2007

⁴² Victor Voitenko, "Russian-Chinese Trade and Economic Co-operation: Current Situation, Problems and Prospects", <http://www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=809> (Nato Parliamentary Assembly Web Page), 30 December 2004

However, as Richard Lotspeich says, “developments in the economic relationship between them in the 1990s and into the new century have been more characterized by mutual respect and pragmatism”⁴³. Russia’s modern armament export to China is a good example of this situation. Russia knows that China also needs stability in the region especially for its increasing economic growth, and it is also aware of any security problem. In addition, as it was mentioned before, these two countries need each other economically and they are in a strategic cooperation.

Although both Russia and China have made efforts to solve the problems, there are still several problems in their economic relationship. Some geographic conditions influence economic relations between Russia and China. One of the major reasons of animosity between Russia and China is border disputes. Common fears of “Sinification” (*kitaizatsiia*) appeared in the Russian Far East in the 1990s in a demographic and political context consistent with these conditions.⁴⁴ Firstly, Russia considers the Chinese immigrants as a threat, because of the fact that the Chinese migration started in the beginning of 1990s, when Russia’s power diminished. According to Russians the number of Chinese trading in street markets in the region is really high and Chinese immigrants do not abide by Russian laws and rules. Secondly, economically developed and more populated part of Russia is far away from its mutual border with China. So, there is a large

⁴³ Richard Lotspeich, “Perspectives on the Economic Relations Between China and Russia”, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol.36, No.1, 2006, p.54

⁴⁴ Mikhail A. Alexseev and C. Richard Hofstetter, “Russia, China, and the Immigration Security Dilemma”, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol.121, No.1, 2006, p.7

demographic difference between Chinese side and Russian side of the border. This situation facilitates labor flows from China to Russia. “It is estimated that there may be 7-10 million Chinese living in Russia by the middle of the century if the legal and illegal immigration from China continues at current rates.”⁴⁵

The most comprehensive study of Chinese immigration, undertaken by the Moscow Center of the Carnegie Foundation, concluded that a realistic assessment of the Chinese presence in Russia as of 1999 numbered at most in the hundred of thousands. Beijing denies these allegations, and flatly disputes the Russian figures on illegal immigration.⁴⁶

Furthermore, infrastructure for the transportation in that region is undeveloped. Marine transport from the more populated part of Russia to industrial centers is relatively expensive. However, China’s import of armaments from Russia is not considerably hindered by geographic circumstances, because transport reckons for a relatively small part of total cost⁴⁷.

Even though both of the countries tried to solve the border problem in 1990s, they reached a deal resolving the last disputes in 2004, when Russian President Putin visited China. Regarding the history of border conflict between

⁴⁵ Andrei Shoumikhin, “Sino-Russian Relations”, <http://www.nipp.org/Adobe/Regional%20Web/December%202004%20webpage.pdf> (National Institute for Public Policy), December 2004, p.9

⁴⁶ Jeanne L. Wilson, “Strategic Partners Russian-Chinese Relations and the July 2001 Friendship Treaty”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol.49, No.3, May/June 2002, p.6

⁴⁷ Richard Lotspeich, “Perspectives on the Economic Relations Between China and Russia”, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol.36, No.1, 2006, p.52

Russia and China, the way in which they settled their territorial disputes bespoke a new set of dynamics behind their bilateral relations.⁴⁸

As it was noted before, economic relations between the two countries are dominated by trade. There has been a noticeable growth in the bilateral trade cooperation between Russia and China since 2000. Especially, Russia and China developed a legal basis for their mutual benefit and bilateral cooperation by signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation in 2001.

The bilateral trade volume in the same year topped the 10 billion dollar mark to reach 10.67 billion dollars. With the bottom-out of the ebbing bilateral economic and trade relations, it only took a three-years' time to outstrip the 20-billion dollar mark. And amid an accelerated growth trend in Sino-Russia economic ties and trade over the past two years, the trade volume of the two countries reached 29.1 billion dollars in 2005 and proceeded to hit 33.4 billion dollars in 2006. As compared to a full decade ago, the bilateral trade volume has shot up approximately six-fold during the 10-year period.⁴⁹

Trade between Russia and China showed a pace of growth in 2007. However, "Chinese exports were nearly entirely responsible for the high pace of growth, and as a result Russia has developed a deficit of \$8.8 billion."⁵⁰ In addition, "Russia's machinery and electric products export dropped drastically

⁴⁸ Yong Deng, "Remolding Great Power Politics: China's Strategic Partnerships with Russia, the European Union, and India", *The Journal of State Studies*, Vol.30, No.4-5, August- October 2007, p.871

⁴⁹ N.A., "Vast Space for Sino-Russian Economic, Trade Ties", http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200703/29/eng20070329_362183.html (People's Daily Online), 29 March 2007

⁵⁰ N.A., "Russia-China Trade Growing Fast", http://dvtimes.org/Russia-China_trade_growing_fast_89047.html, 31 January 2008

particularly in the post-2001 years.”⁵¹ This situation has negatively effected the healthy growth of trade between China and Russia.⁵² Today, both Russia and China try to solve all the problems to accomplish their trade volume objective of \$60 billion to \$80 billion by the year 2010.

In order to analyse Northeast Asian security, it should be considered that Japan is an influential economic power in the region. Therefore, the following chapter will examine its role in Northeast security and its relations with Russia and China.

⁵¹ N.A., “Vast Space for Sino-Russian Economic, Trade Ties”, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200703/29/eng20070329_362183.html (People’s Daily Online), 29 March 2007

⁵² Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

RUSSIA, CHINA AND THE ROLE OF JAPAN IN THE NORTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY

For the security of Northeast Asia, it would be a mistake to consider China and Russia as great powers and to relegate Japan to a lower position. China's rise is not an obstacle for Japan. Japan's economic power, military capacity, technological capability and diplomatic effect are indisputable. In addition, China's rise makes Japan strategically more important to the United States and to the Northeast Asian countries.⁵³ Russia, China and Japan are important actors, not only in a regional context but plausible claimants of the status of "world powers" and in view of their geographical proximity inextricably involved in one another's foreign affairs.⁵⁴

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the security environment in Northeast Asia changed substantially. The probability of Russian attack against any country in the region became unlikely. Russia's military forces were not well-financed because of the fact that it had domestic economic and political problems.

⁵³ Aurelia George Mulgan, "Why Japan Still Matters", *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol.12, No.2, 2005, p.104

⁵⁴ Lowell Dittmer, "The Sino-Japanese-Russian Triangle", *Journal of Chinese Political Sciences*, Vol.10, No.1, April 2005, p.1

Although the economic and political changes in the old communist bloc opened new foreign policy opportunities to all three actors, only China and Russia realized the value of new political environment. Both China and Russia have tried to conclude a peace treaty in the region. However, political struggles and economic problems in Russia let neither Russia nor Japan realize this target about their bilateral relations. China's leaders view Japan, Taiwan, and the United States as the most "sensitive" of the three foreign policy relationships, but Japan is the most difficult one for them to handle.⁵⁵ According to Chinese people Japan is the most emotional issue. Because of perceptions of a threat from China, Japan wanted to revise its postwar peace constitution and strengthen its military defense.

In the last 15 years, Japan faced a number of security threats, such as the Sarin subway attack⁵⁶ of 1995, the Taiwan Strait crisis in 1996, and the North Korean missile tests of 1998 and 2006. Its responses to these crises were ad hoc measures that reflect a desire to assume greater defense responsibilities but fail to encapsulate clear, long-term security objectives.⁵⁷ In fact, Japan has a strong military structure. It possesses one of the world's most modern military forces. It is the second country in the world to develop an advanced missile defense

⁵⁵ Susan L. Shrink, *China: Fragile Superpower*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, p.144, emphasis original

⁵⁶ The Sarin gas attack occurred in 1995. Members of AUM Shinrikyo, which is a Japanese religious movement, released sarin gas on several lines of the Tokyo Subway in an act of domestic terrorism. Many people died and were wounded in the attack.

⁵⁷ Nicholas Szechenyi, "A Turning Point for Japan's Self-Defense Forces", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.29, No.4, Autumn 2006, p.146

system.⁵⁸ Even though Japan is not a nuclear power, and it does not intend to become one, in a crisis it could build an effective nuclear arsenal quickly.⁵⁹

Japan's economy is the second largest in the world and also it is the second largest aid donor to World Bank and IMF. "As the largest source of overseas net investment⁶⁰ and the world's largest creditor nation,⁶¹ Japan exercises enormous influence in global finance."⁶²

I argue here that relations between China, Russia and Japan are important in terms of security of the Northeast Asia, because, both China and Russia are considered as huge continental land powers and Japan is considered as a maritime power. Whereas the great strategic triangle was assumed to have implications for the international balance of power, the international implications of the Sino-Japanese-Russian relationship are more geographically limited.⁶³

⁵⁸ Aurelia George Mulgan, "Why Japan Still Matters", *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol.12, No.2, 2005, p.108

⁵⁹ Thomas Berger, "Japan's International Relations: The Political and Security Dimensions," in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *The International Relations of Northeast Asia* (Lanham, Md., 2004), p.135, quoted in, Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, Knopf Publishing Group, 29 April 2008, p.37

⁶⁰ Marcus Noland, *East Asian Economic Growth and Changes in the Regional System*, p.2 <http://www.jcer.or.jp/center/pdf/symposium050405m-Noland.pdf>, quoted in, Aurelia George Mulgan, "Why Japan Still Matters", *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol.12, No.2, 2005, p.105

⁶¹ Japan holds the world's largest foreign exchange reserves worth \$840 billion. China's foreign reserves are \$700 billion http://www.mabico.com/en/news/20050404/central_banks/article20052/, quoted in, Aurelia George Mulgan, "Why Japan Still Matters", *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol.12, No.2, 2005, p.105

⁶² Aurelia George Mulgan, "Why Japan Still Matters", *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol.12, No.2, 2005, p.105

⁶³ Lowell Dittmer, "The Sino-Japanese-Russian Triangle", *Journal of Chinese Political Sciences*, Vol.10, No.1, April 2005, p.2

3.1 Japan's Foreign Policy and the Northeast Asian Security

Following the beginning of Japan's participation in the United Nations in 1956, it has adopted a "UN-centered policy" for its foreign diplomacy.⁶⁴ The crucial point of Japan's strategic policy is not becoming a major military power, but being a permanent member of the UN. The primary reason under this mind is Japan's postwar culture of anti-militarism. To understand Japan's foreign policy's influence on the Northeast Asia, it is necessary to analyze Japan's security and defense policy, the perception of a Chinese threat, the North Korean nuclear and missile threats, and Japan's own nuclear and missile program.

After the World War II, Japan started to acknowledge its aggression toward other Asian countries in Northeast Asia and its war crimes.⁶⁵ Another step was making a revision of the 1890 Meiji Constitution. In 1947 the Japanese Diet⁶⁶ accepted the final version of the Meiji Constitution, which included Article 9. In its entirety Article 9 reads:

1. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.
2. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be

⁶⁴ Katsumi Ishizuka, "Japan's New Role in Peace-Building Missions", *East Asia*, Vol.23, No.3, Fall 2006, p.3

⁶⁵ Karen Sue Smith, "The Power of Japan: Does it lie in military strength or in its unique witness for peace?", *America*, 22 October 2007, p.16

⁶⁶ The Japanese Diet is the parliament of Japan

maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.⁶⁷

Japan signed the 1951 Mutual Security Treaty and the 1954 Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement with the United States. With these agreements, Japan let the United States use its territory for permanent military bases and the United States started to protect Japan.⁶⁸ Therefore, Japan decreased its military, unlike its highly militarized past. Even though the United States put pressure on Japan, it did not interfere to the Vietnam War. Japan kept its nuclear pacifism and nonaggression policy. It started to focus on developing its economy. In addition, Japan signed Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. However, Japan's nonaggression policy does not mean its military force is weak. Japan has Self-Defense Forces including navy, air force and army and in fact they have been developed, strengthened and grown in size.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US-Japanese alliance has lost its importance. However, after the Cold War, Japan and the United States are faced with Chinese and North Korean threats. Military threats have increased for Japan such as the military buildup of China, the violation of Japan's territorial waters by a Chinese nuclear-powered submarine and China's anti-separation law which authorized the use of military force against Taiwan, the test firing of

⁶⁷ Karen Sue Smith, "The Power of Japan: Does it lie in military strength or in its unique witness for peace?", *America*, 22 October 2007, p.16

⁶⁸ Karen Sue Smith, "The Power of Japan: Does it lie in military strength or in its unique witness for peace?", *America*, 22 October 2007, p.16

Taepodong ballistic missiles by North Korea, its nuclear program and the intrusion of its spy ship into Japanese waters.⁶⁹ These increasing military threats have caused a great concern in Japan. In response to increasing threats by Korea and China, Japan wanted to strengthen its cooperation with the United States in regional security, however, it was not sufficient for Japan's security.

Although Japan does not see any country as a potential enemy, some potential military threats come out occasionally. These threats are derived from some events such as the Taiwan Strait problem or the tension in the Korean Peninsula. It should be added that at present China is considered as the biggest potential threat to Japan, in spite of the nuclear experiments of North Korea. China's rapidly growing military power and its nuclear potential cause big concern in Japan.

Besides China and Russia, Japan has opposed the development of nuclear weapons by North Korea. Actually, we can say that Japan is more concerned among these countries due to the fact that if North Korea possesses nuclear weapons, the security of Japan would be directly affected. Therefore, Japan might use North Korea's nuclear capability as an excuse to have nuclear weapons. For the time being, Japan is under the protection of the US. However, this alliance may not continue forever. In the future, if US-Japan alliance comes to an end and Japan possesses nuclear weapons, this new situation in the region alarms for not

⁶⁹ Sharif Shuja, "Japan's Strategic Thinking", *Contemporary Review*, Summer 2006, p.159

only the US but also China. Because, one of the Chinese concerns is possibility of Japan's missile technology export to Taiwan.⁷⁰

China has developed its economy and position in the world. North Korea has become a nuclear threat. Moreover, the United States' troops have weakened because of wars in the Middle East. It means that Japan's protector's military power has reduced. Japan started to feel not secure. Therefore, it started to alter its policy and deploys its military beyond its borders such as Afghanistan and Iraq. "Technically Japanese troops do not engage in combat there but provide logistical support."⁷¹ With these events, and considering that Japan is a unique country which was exposed to a nuclear attack, it is not surprising for Japan to discuss the Constitution especially Article 9.

Japan decided to make a revision of the Peace-keeping Operations Law and the constitution with the Self-Defence Forces Law. The aim of Japan was to extend the range of peacekeeping activities. Yet, as Julie Gilson specifies, "for historical reasons, the Japanese government has been unable to play a traditional peacekeeping role."⁷² In the Japanese invasion in World War II, many innocent people from China, Korea, and other Northeast Asian countries were sacrificed.⁷³

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.173

⁷¹ Karen Sue Smith, "The Power of Japan: Does it lie in military strength or in its unique witness for peace?", *America*, 22 October 2007, p.17

⁷² Julie Gilson, "Building Peace or Following the Leader? Japan's Peace Consolidation Diplomacy", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.80, No.1, Spring 2007, p.27

⁷³ Byung-Woon Lyou, "Building the Northeast Asian Community", *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, Vol.11, No.2, 2004, p.301

Furthermore, Japan's bilateral relation with the United States is another problem for its peacekeeping role.

In January 2007, the Law on Transforming the Department of National Defense into the Ministry of Defense was adopted within the framework of the administrative-legal reform as a supplement to the Law on Establishing the Department of National Defense.⁷⁴

In addition to the Law on the Self-Defense Forces, Japan's nuclear pacifism and nonaggression policy and signing Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Japan also participated in the United Nations peace-keeping operations.

As to the development of the military potential, the long-term program of the construction of the Forces of Self-Defense for the 1996-2015 period, says that "according to the Constitution, Japan limits the rates and scope of its defensive construction on its own initiative, strictly following the main principles of its policy oriented exclusively to defense. Japan will not become a military power which could threaten other states, it exercises civilian control over the armed forces, adheres to the three non-nuclear principles and consistently implements Japanese-American measures on security."⁷⁵

All these aspects are extremely crucial not only for Japan's own security, but also for universal peace and security. Today, there are many arguments about Japan's rearmament. Even though, Japan's democratic government and the seriously enhanced interaction of global economical interests all indicate that

⁷⁴ Alexander Shlyndov, "The Armed Forces of Japan: Modern Conditions and Development Prospects", *Far Eastern Affairs*, Vol.35, No.4, p.26

⁷⁵ Boei Hakusyo.1999, Tokyo, 1999, p.375, quoted in, Alexander Shlyndov, "The Armed Forces of Japan: Modern Conditions and Development Prospects", *Far Eastern Affairs*, p.22

Japan's military power, if restored, will be for non-aggressive, peaceful defense use,⁷⁶ there could be fear if Japan becomes armed again.

3.2 Russian – Japanese Relations

The relationship between Russia and Japan during the Soviet period was frozen. Russia's humiliating defeat in the Russo – Japanese War in 1904, the defeat of Japanese expeditionary forces in the Soviet Far East in World War II, and the Soviet annexation of the Kuril Islands are the main events which affect relations between the two countries. In fact, the relationship between the two countries is hindered especially by a dispute over the Kuril Islands.

During the Soviet period, according to Russia, Japan was an American satellite. Gorbachev's two speeches at Vladivostok in 1986 and at Khabarovsk in 1988 were signaling his "new thinking". Neglected Far East became the dynamic Asian Pacific region for Russia. After perestroika and glasnost, there became an interest in adopting the Japanese model, however Yeltsin decided more Western-oriented way for privatization. As for Japan, it considered Russia as the main threat to its national security during the Cold War. In the post-Cold War era, Japan insisted on the return of four Northern Islands, which is the main issue between Russia and Japan. Although Japanese demands from Russia are much more modest than Chinese demands, Gorbachev was successful to accommodate

⁷⁶ Jesse C. H. Hwa, "More Military Outlay by Japan-Yea or Nay", *Chinese American Forum*, Vol.7, No.3, January 1992, p.13

Chinese demands but not the Japanese. By taking a harder line in response to the Soviet and then the Russian diplomatic approaches from the outset, the building of economic, cultural and other bridges that would begin in the case of Russia and China with the 1982-1989 “normalization” talks could never flourish in the case of Japan.⁷⁷

Comparing with an agreement between Russia and China, for Russia it is more difficult to compromise with Japan. Russia and China were very eager to boost bilateral relations. In contrast, Japan was more interested in having good relations with the United States during late of the Cold War. After the Cold War, Russia and Japan realized that they needed for each other more, but conditions were not suitable for decisive action.

The end of the Cold War resulted in strong expectations for Japan and Russia to normalize their relations. For Russia, the main profits from improved relations with Japan are increased great-power status and the prospect of considerable Japanese investment in its devastated economy.⁷⁸ Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the government of Boris Yeltsin took power in Russia. Solving the Kuril Islands problem has been a precondition for Japan to sign a peace treaty with Russia. Although it was crucial for Russia to get economic assistance from Japan, Russia repeated its opposition to returning the

⁷⁷ Lowell Dittmer, “The Sino-Japanese-Russian Triangle”, *Journal of Chinese Political Sciences*, Vol.10, No.1, April 2005, p.4

⁷⁸ Charles E. Ziegler, “Russo – Japanese Relations: A New Start for the Twenty-first Century?”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol.46, No.3, May/June 1999, pp.16

Kuril Islands to Japan. Japan did not want to increase commercial activity with Russia until they resolve the Kuril Island problem completely. Japan had a question whether to accept the 1956 offer and receive two islands and then negotiate for giving back of the remaining islands later or to hold out for a just settlement for the four islands. The preferred Japanese policy about this issue seems to have been: “all (islands at once) or nothing.”⁷⁹

Yeltsin cancelled his presidential trip to Japan in 1992. This situation undermined the possibility of normalizing relations between Russia and Japan. Yeltsin’s long postponed October 1993 visit was not efficient enough. Between 1996 – 1998, Japan intensified its activities under Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto. He proclaimed his new Eurasian doctrine in July 1997, which was largely evaluated as a radical breakthrough in the Russian-Japanese dialogue.⁸⁰ Hashimoto pledged to base future relations of Russia and Japan on three principles: mutual trust, mutual benefits and a long-term perspective to create a solid foundation for the twenty-first century.⁸¹ In the summits, at Krosnoyarsk in 1997 and Kawana in 1998, Hashimoto and Yeltsin were able to establish a strong personal relationship with each other, subsequently Yeltsin promised to work toward a peace treaty. After Vladimir Putin was elected as the president of Russia, Japan’s target became a breakthrough in bilateral relations with Russia.

⁷⁹Lowell Dittmer, “The Sino-Japanese-Russian Triangle”, *Journal of Chinese Political Sciences*, Vol.10, No.1, April 2005, p.5

⁸⁰ Alexei V. Zagorsky, “Three Years on a Path to Nowhere: The Hashimoto Initiative in Russian-Japanese Relations.”, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.74, No.1, 2001, p.75

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.75

Following the doctrine, Russian-Japanese summits in 1997 – 1998, the official visit of Hashimoto’s successor, Obuchi Keizo, to Moscow in 1998 and the official visit to Tokyo by Yeltsin’s successor, Vladimir Putin, in 2000 encouraged Japan and Russia to reach the peace treaty target. Indeed, the aim of reaching the peace treaty is an issue pending since the end of World War II. However, this aim failed to come to fruition. LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) politician, Suzuki Muneo, enlisted Mori Yoshiro into pursuit of a breakthrough in bilateral relations with Russia when he suddenly replaced Obuchi Keizo as prime minister.⁸² Progress was achieved, when Putin visited Tokyo in September 2000. Putin declared that the 1956 Japan – Soviet Joint Declaration is still valid. In the 1956 Treaty Russia pledged to return two islands. However, abandoning the other two islands caused a backlash in Japan. After Koizumi Junichiro became the prime minister, he reversed course. Russia came to an impasse with this situation. The 9/11 attacks changed the global environment. Russia supported the United States against terrorism. Japan’s relations with China and South Korea were not great. Russia revoked from giving Japan even two Kuril Islands.

In 2000 more prerequisites were realized by both Russia and Japan. This situation increased the probability of a breakthrough in their relations. Popular national leaders’ strong policies, good relations of both countries with the United States, sharing common concerns about China’s growing power, having serious

⁸² Gilbert Rozman, “A chance for a breakthrough in Russo-Japanese relations: will the logic of great power relations prevail?”, *The Pacific Review*, Vol.15, No.3, 2002, p.325-326

economic troubles of both countries and their bilateral ties to solve these problems are some of the preconditions. According to Gilbert Rozman, “as for the leaders of both countries, Russia and Japan were among the few countries whose leaders at the end of 2001 enjoyed popularity ratings around 80 per cent and reputations that suggested they could become national saviors.”⁸³ In 2000 Putin in Russia and in 2001 Koizumi in Japan emerged as popular leaders. With Putin’s dramatic shift in Russian foreign policy after 9/11 attacks, Russia and Japan became on the United States’ side against terrorism. Although Both Russia and Japan are concerned about the United States’ power, combat against terrorism became an ideal subject to work together. China is another issue for the two countries to act together. Both Russia and Japan concern about the rise of China. Their economic situation and energy security are other issues for them to become closer to each other.

As for their trade relationship, it seems to have made only modest progress. Russia and Japan signed the Moscow Declaration for a Constructive Partnership in November 1998. It coincides with the Sino – Japanese partnership announcement. Following the Moscow Declaration, Russia and Japan intended some joint ventures for infrastructure such as pipeline or railroad construction. They also concluded a bilateral fishing agreement in 1998. With this agreement,

⁸³ Ibid., p.330

they established measures for visa-free travel between the southern Kuril Islands and Japan.⁸⁴

Today, they are not realistic threats to each other. Russia supports Japan's permanent membership on the UN Security Council. Japan supported Russia's entry into the ASEAN Regional Forum and APEC.⁸⁵ Today, Russia's military presence in the region is not considered as a potential security threat by Japan. As to Russia, Japan is cited as a territorial threat to it because of four Kuril Islands, which are economically dependent on Japan.

⁸⁴ Lowell Dittmer, "The Sino-Japanese-Russian Triangle", *Journal of Chinese Political Sciences*, Vol.10, No.1, April 2005, p.5-6

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.5

3.3 Chinese – Japanese Relations

Rivalry between Japan and China is one of the permanent features in the world, extending back to the nineteenth century and for many centuries before that.⁸⁶ Relations between the two countries are still in the shadow of their history. Significant issues in relations between China and Japan are the legacy of World War II, the Taiwan issue and territorial disputes. Following the end of the Cold War, China redefined its potential threats. Chinese strategic planners consider Japan as China's major rival and enemy.⁸⁷ Today, China is worried about the increasing expansion of the Japanese military's role. At the same time, Japan is afraid of "China threat".

In 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis caused the probability of a military clash between China and the United States.⁸⁸ After the Taiwan Strait crisis, the United States and Japan signed the U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security-Alliance for the 21st Century. This declaration deepened China's suspicion of the United States' strategy toward China, and China's perception of Japan as a threat became

⁸⁶ Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, Knopf Publishing Group, 29 April 2008, p.38

⁸⁷ David Shambaugh, "The Insecurity of Security: The PLA's Evolving Doctrine and Threat Perceptions Towards 2000", *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, 13, No.1, Spring 1994, p.6, quoted in Jiang Yang, "Sino-Japanese Relations: Implications for Southeast Asia", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol.25, No.2, August 2003, p.307

⁸⁸ 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis was the effect of a series of missile tests conducted by the People's Republic of China in the waters surrounding Taiwan including the Taiwan Strait from July 21, 1995 to March 23, 1996. The 1979 Taiwan Relations Act proclaimed American support for the peaceful reunification of Taiwan and the mainland, and committed the United States to help Taiwan defend itself in case of Chinese aggression. On 19 December 1995 the US sent the USS Nimitz from the Eastern Pacific to the Taiwan Straits.

more complicated. With major changes in global politics, Taiwan problem brings different meanings to different international actors at different times.⁸⁹ However, all international actors know that the Taiwan Strait is geo-strategically important. Acknowledgement of the Taiwan Strait's importance leads these actors on making Taiwan's political status in the world certain.

Wei Jingsheng, the founder of 'Democracy Wall' in Beijing and famous Chinese democracy and human rights fighter, says that: "Beijing needs a weak Japan and needs to keep Japan in a more manageable position in case of a military confrontation on the Taiwan issue."⁹⁰ Chinese experts believe that Japan's military power is much stronger than it appears. Japan is also an economic regional power. In addition, China believes that the United States' war against terrorism is a golden opportunity for Japan to send its military overseas.⁹¹ In this case, Chinese analysts are in a dilemma. On the one hand, the United States wants to prevent the emergence of a great power in Asia. Thus, the United States' strategy in the region lets Japan become a strong assistant instead of a big power. In other words, while Japan is having the opportunity to expand its military, the U.S.-Japan alliance prevents Japan from being too independent.⁹²

⁸⁹ Daojiong Zha, "The Taiwan Problem in Japan-China Relations: An Irritant or Destroyer?", *East Asia* Spring-Summer 2001, p.207

⁹⁰ Joshua Li, "Beijing Makes a U-Turn in Its Japan Policy", *Chinascopes*, January/February 2007, p.27

⁹¹ Jiang Yang, "Sino-Japanese Relations: Implications for Southeast Asia", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol.25, No.2, August 2003, p.309

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.309

History plays a crucial role in relations between China and Japan. Negative images of Japan in China has been deeply rooted and become a product of manipulation, as recent theories have indicated.⁹³ In addition, anti-Japanese popular nationalism is currently increasing in China.⁹⁴ It is obvious that China does not want Japan to play a greater political role in the region or in the world. Therefore, China's attitude toward Japan's quest for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council has not been positive. Chinese diplomats work to prevent Japan from becoming a permanent member on the United Nations Security Council. China thinks that this will offer an opportunity to Japan to play a greater role in the world, maybe with its military forces.

In June 1994, Jiang Zemin⁹⁵ said that the Chinese "understand and attach importance" to Japan's wish. "China is in favour of expanding the size of UNSC when the time is ripe to reflect the reality of the changing international situation, and the increasing number of UN members," Jiang claimed. But at the same time, he maintained that "the wealth of a country should not be the sole condition taken into consideration, and that the principle of fair regional distribution, and the principle of unanimity in consultation should be fully honoured in approaching this issue."⁹⁶

⁹³ Shogo Suzuki, "The Importance of 'Othering' in China's National Identity: Sino-Japanese Relations as a Stage of Identity Conflicts", *The Pacific Review* Vol.20, No.1, March 2007, p.24

⁹⁴ Yinan He, "History, Chinese Nationalism and the Emerging Sino-Japanese Conflict", *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol.16, No.50, February 2007, p.1

⁹⁵ Jiang Zemin was the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China from 1989 to 2002, the President of the People's Republic of China from 1993 to 2003, and the Chairman of the Central Military Commission from 1989 to 2004.

⁹⁶ Xinhua, "Xinhua Reports on Interview", 10 June 1994, carried in FBIS-China, 13 June 1994, p.2, quoted in Jiang Yang, "Sino-Japanese Relations: Implications for Southeast Asia", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol.25, No.2, August 2003, p.311, emphasis original

In the 1990s, Japan realized that military modernization of China was a potential threat for Japan. Therefore, Japan decided to participate in security dialogues with China and tried to encourage China for this aim. Security talks were held in 1993 and 1995. However, the nuclear tests which China conducted in 1995 and Taiwan Strait crisis made it impossible for China and Japan to make a significant progress. Then Japan began in 1998 to actively participate in the American TMD (theater missile defense) system.⁹⁷ There has been cooperation between Japan and the United States on ballistic missile defense since the late 1980s, but that cooperation has been greatly strengthened and accelerated with Japan's participation in TMD system of the United States. The United States and Japan on one side arguing that TMD is defensive in nature and that the introduction of TMD in Asia actually is irreversible, while China, Russia, and the North Korea are on the other side expressing deep concern and strong objection to the idea of TMD.⁹⁸

Although it is true that relations between China and Japan have serious problems in some aspects, there are some reasons for China to approach to Japan in some cases. Westernization is one of the major issues for Chinese Government. Pressure on human rights from the West is regarded as part of the subversive

⁹⁷ The objective of a TMD system is to defend against missile attacks.

⁹⁸ Duan Hong, "TMD, US-Japan Relations, and East Asian Security(1)", *East Asian Regional Security Futures: Theater Missile Defense Implications*, The United Nations University, Tokyo, Japan, <http://www.nautilus.org/archives/nukepolicy/TMD-Conference/duanpaper.html>, June 24-5, 2000

“peaceful change” strategy to change China’s political system.⁹⁹ Furthermore, From 1980s, China realized that a strong modern economy is necessary to increase comprehensive national power. Therefore economic development, which started in the beginning of the 1980s, has become the highest aim in China. It is obvious that in these cases Japan has played a vital role in China’s development.¹⁰⁰

The Sino-Japanese Joint Statement was issued on November 26, 2000. It was the first time Japanese “aggression” inflicted on the Chinese people in the past appeared in a formal document. However, it does not make the Chinese completely satisfied because of the fact that the word “apology” was not used in the document.¹⁰¹ The Chinese side was not pleased about the Taiwan issue part in the statement, either. As a result, the joint statement could not be signed by China and Japan. It was an indication of the complicated relations between the two countries. As for the Taiwan issue, the joint statement stated:

Japan promised to abide by its stance on the Taiwan issue as contained in the China-Japan Joint Statement, and reiterated that there is only one China. It will maintain only unofficial and regional contacts with Taiwan.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Jiang Yang, “Sino-Japanese Relations: Implications for Southeast Asia”, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol.25, No.2, August 2003, p.313

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.313

¹⁰¹ Joseph Y.S. Cheng, “Sino-Japanese Relations in the Twenty-first Century”, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol.33, No.2, 2003, p.253

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.253-254

On the whole, China's policies toward Japan in the past decade have been driven by two forces: suspect of Japan and pragmatic consideration of national interests.¹⁰³ It is difficult to trust Japan for the Chinese, however, China is aware of Japan's importance for its comprehensive national power. Future relations between China and Japan face several problems such as strategic competition, their common history, territorial disputes, the Taiwan issue and nationalism. There could be some frictions between the two countries just like in the past. Yet, these frictions do not represent a significant deterioration in relations between China and Japan. Nevertheless, these frictions are symptoms of more serious difficulties in their relations with each other.¹⁰⁴

The Korean Peninsula is a crucial region in Northeast Asia. South Korea's role in resolution of Korean reunification issue or North Korean nuclear problem and its relations with Russia and China as big powers are very important. Therefore, South Korea's role in the Northeast Asian security will be analysed in the following chapter.

¹⁰³ Jiang Yang, "Sino-Japanese Relations: Implications for Southeast Asia", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol.25, No.2, August 2003, p.322

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Y.S. Cheng, "Sino-Japanese Relations in the Twenty-first Century", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol.33, No.2, 2003, p.251

CHAPTER 4

RUSSIA, CHINA AND THE ROLE OF SOUTH KOREA IN THE NORTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY

The Korean Peninsula played a crucial role in the politics of Northeast Asia during the Cold War. Korea is historically considered by its neighbours as both opportunity and threat, and has strategically crucial position as it alters the regional balance of power.¹⁰⁵ It was invaded by Japan in 1910 and ruled until the end of World War II in 1945. It became officially divided in 1948. The south part of Korea was occupied by the United States and the north part was occupied by the Soviet Union. Due to the fact that Korea had been divided into two parts in an environment of the Cold War, it developed two completely different political systems. While South Korea embraced democracy after a period of authoritarian rule, North Korea followed communism. South Korea's official name became Republic of Korea and North Korea's official name became Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Korean War broke out in 1950 because of North Korea's invasion of the South. While Soviet Russia and Communist China supported North Korea, the United States, along with fifteen other nations¹⁰⁶, supported the

¹⁰⁵ Tuwa Kahrs, "Regional Security Complex Theory and Chinese Policy Towards North Korea", *East Asia*, Vol.21, No.4, Winter 2004, p.67

¹⁰⁶ Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom

South. The Korean War ended in 1953, but it caused a big ruin in both parts of Korea. The cease-fire was signed on the 27th of July 1953, however it has never been replaced by a formal peace treaty. On the 27th of May 2009, North Korea announced that it withdrew from the armistice and no longer considers itself bound by the cease-fire agreement.

Following the Korean War, South Korea developed its international trade. Today, South Korea is a developed country with a high standard of living. However, North Korea's economy has declined and today North Korean people suffer from poverty. During the past decade South Korea and North Korea have tried to take few steps toward reunification. However, they could not achieve this target.

In addition, there occur changes in both Koreas' relations with China and Russia. During the Cold War Era, South Korean relations with Russia and China were frozen because of the ideological differences. However, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, South Korea and Russia started to have close relations and cooperation such as energy cooperation. As for China, since the Chinese opened their economy to the outside world and developed it, South Korea has become a good partner and technology provider to China. When we look at these changes, we see that countries' economic and political profits shape their foreign policies and relations with each other.

In other words, in this chapter of the thesis, probability of Korean reunification and South Korea's security policy will be examined. In this part,

South Korea's relations with Russia and China during the post-Cold War period and also its changes will be analyzed.

4.1 South Korea's Foreign Policy and the Northeast Asian Security

As South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun aptly put it, the reunification of Korea is Korean people's dream.¹⁰⁷ Most of the Koreans think that the separation is intolerable and it is against nature of a nation-state. When we look at other countries in Northeast Asia, we see that they wish to prevent a reunified Korea due to the fact that they do not want another regional power in the region. Today, they are not on behalf of the reunification of the two Koreas obviously because of the fact that the reunification of South and North Korea could alter the nature of relations in the region. They want a secure and stable region surrounding them, therefore they prefer a reunification with a gradual reform at least in order to evade damages of all of a sudden diversion.

What is the meaning of the Korean reunification in terms of Northeast Asian security? As Gil-Soo Han and Andrew Eungi Kim say, "the division partitioned Korean land, separated families and people, caused an unbridgeable rift in ideology, and divided political and economic systems."¹⁰⁸ It is clear that the Korean reunification is related to political stability in the region. Furthermore, a

¹⁰⁷ V. Denisov, "Moscow-Seoul: Partnership Based on Trust", *International Affairs*, p.134

¹⁰⁸ Gil-Soo Han and Andrew Eungi Kim, "The Korean Christian Movement towards Reunification of the Two Koreas: a Review in Retrospect", *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, Vol.6, No.3, October 2006, p.236

unified Korea's internal arrangements influence international politics definitely. Russia and China have concerns about Korea for security of the region. The model of a solid civil society in Korea would support Russia's seek for stable civil institutions and encourage their development in China.¹⁰⁹ South Korea's security was also disquiet for Japan because of its investments in the country.

During the early 1990s, South Korea and North Korea were moving toward compromise. They realized that coexistence and peace are essential for stability in the region in the post Cold War era. Therefore, the two countries signed an Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-Aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation, which was called Basic Agreement, and a Joint Declaration for Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Approach of South Korea is different than North Korea's for the reunification. North Korea thinks that working to unify Korea should be accomplished all at once. In contrast, South Korea considers that reunification takes time and signing these agreements is a first step in this process. The second and at the same time the basic difference between the two countries is their strategies of forming the government. South Korea wants a free, all-Korean general election under the management and supervision of the United Nations. However, North Korea argues that the general election should be supervised not

¹⁰⁹ Sharif M. Shuja, "Korean Reunification", *Contemporary Review*, Vol.283, No.1651, August 2003, p.67

by the UN, but by “neutral countries” owing to the fact that North Korea fought against UN forces in the Korean War.¹¹⁰

In addition to these controversies, North Korea is not pleased with the US troops in South Korea. However, according to South Korea, a military balance between South Korea and North Korea should be retained until appropriate conditions for peaceful reunification can be executed.

As it was mentioned before, Korean reunification is Korean people’s dream, however, there is another crucial question: If the Korean reunification occurs, will there be any threat for its ideological system? Regarding North Korea’s invasion of South Korea in the name of national reunification in 1950, South Korea perceives North Korea as a threat.

Hope for a rapid process of reunification being affected from the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union has been postponed because of demonstrated impressive power of North Korea during the nuclear crisis of 1994. Furthermore, the German experience shows South Korea that the costs of unification extend beyond South Korea’s capacity to finance them.¹¹¹

There are two ways for Korean reunification: war or collapse and absorption.¹¹² If an unstable situation occurs in North Korea, there could be a possibility for South Korea to achieve reunification by taking measures to gain the

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.71

¹¹¹ Ming Liu, “An Obsessed Task: Prospects, Models, and Impact of Korean Reunification”, *East Asia: An International Quarterly*, Vol.17, No.4, 22 December 1999, p.30

¹¹² Ibid., p.42

upper hand. In this context, the question is how rapidly the reunification will proceed. Actually, North Korea might progressively transform its political system into democratic political system and economic structure into free market economy during transformation period with investment of South Korea. In this case, North Korea's economic, financial and social systems might approach the level of South Korea. However, Korean reunification seems unlikely to be achieved in near future. Examples of divided nations and their experiences demonstrated that it is impossible for systems with conflicting ideologies to be merged peacefully into a unitary governmental structure. Therefore, in the Korean case, reunification on the basis of one ideology is likely, however having two different ideological systems in a unitary governmental structure is impossible.

It is clear that on the other hand, in the current situation of South and North Korea, they have been unable to follow a common policy for common interests. Their power has been divided, and they have had limited power to play an active role in regional issues. After Korean reunification, self-confident Korea might be a regional power like Japan thanks to unified economic capacity and military strength.

It is obvious that the Korean reunification will affect Russia, China, Japan and the United States. Therefore, Korean reunification necessitates consensus among these big powers. Indeed, when South Korea and North Korea decide to reunify, Russia, China, Japan and the United States will have no choice except accepting the new situation regardless of their own concerns. However, regarding

history of Korean Peninsula, we can say that the first priority is to guarantee its security as a smaller country surrounded by big powers.

4.2 Russian – South Korean Relations

The Cold War and ideological confrontation between the two countries caused an obstacle for the Soviet Union and South Korea to normalize their relations with each other. Russia strove to secure great economic support from South Korea until the mid-1990s, at the same time, it chose to enhance its diplomatic influences by maintaining close relations towards both South and North Korea from then.¹¹³

The early 1990s was an expectation period for Russia and South Korea. South Korea's expectations were about democracy, human rights and market economy. On the other hand, Russia's expectation was about Korea's peaceful reunification. According to Russia, while it responded to South Korea's demands and it also opened the archive documents about the Korean War, South Korea did not work enough for the reunification with North Korea.

In 1990, the foreign ministers of Russia and South Korea signed an agreement on the establishment of diplomatic relations. This was a signal of leaving behind the confrontation period and opening a new chapter in their relations. Following this agreement, Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev and

¹¹³ Seung-yong Kim, "Russo-Japanese Rivalry Over Korean Buffer at the Beginning of the 20th Century and Its Implications", *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol.16, 2005, p.640

South Korean President Roh Tae Woo signed the Declaration on the Principles of Relations in the same year. Moreover, during Russian President Boris Yeltsin's period, the two countries concluded the Treaty on Basic Relations between Russia and South Korea in 1992. This document does not contain any military obligations. Russia and South Korea emphasized that the Treaty could not be used to the detriment of any state.¹¹⁴ This emphasis is very important especially for Russia, due to the fact that it maintains relations with both Korean states. Furthermore, Russia should be careful about its relations with South Korea not to be harmful to its relations with North Korea and vice versa.

Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Cooperation was signed by Russia and North Korea in 2002, and actually, this treaty improved not only their bilateral relations but also Russian-South Korean relations. Because, with this treaty Russia gain a major independent player role on the Korean Peninsula and this role made Russia more important for South Korea. Indeed, South Korea tried to persuade Russia to uphold its own side. However, Russia follows a balanced policy on the Korean Peninsula and tries not to damage its profits on either Korean state.

The end of 1990s was not an easy period for the relationship between Russia and South Korea. After difficult years of military dictatorship, which was established in 1961, South Korea entered a process of democratic political

¹¹⁴ “Dogovor ob osnovakh otnoshenii Rossiiskoi Federatsii i Respubliki Korea,” V.P. Tkachenko, *Koreiskii poluostrov i interesy Rossii*, Moscow, 2000, pp.204-207, quoted in, V. Denisov, “Moscow-Seoul: Partnership Based on Trust”, *International Affairs*, p.127

transformations in 1990s. Today, South Korea is one of the top 12 most developed countries in the world in terms of its economic situation. In terms of its political structure, it has improved its democratic institutions.

It is almost twenty years now since Russia and South Korea normalized their bilateral relations. Today, political dialogue and foreign policy interaction between Russia and South Korea are highly intensified. They cooperated in international organizations such as the UN. In addition, it should be mentioned that South Korea supported Russia to join APEC.

Russia and South Korea share a common view about some problems such as international terrorism and nuclear weapons. The Korean nuclear crisis is one of the major subjects for political interaction between the two countries. Russia's position in this issue is clear. Even though Russia has consistently supported a nuclear-free status for the Korean Peninsula, it wants a continuation of the six-party negotiation process.¹¹⁵ South Korea is in favour of a solution to the North Korean nuclear problem under the six-party negotiations.

As a matter of fact, the nuclear problem in the Korean Peninsula is relevant not only to North Korea but also to South Korea. South Korea carried out nuclear experiments in 1982 and 2000. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspected South Korean nuclear facilities. Although South Korea officially declared that it had no intention of developing nuclear weapons and

¹¹⁵ "Press Statement by Vladimir Putin and Roh Moo Hyun on the Results of Korean-Russian Talks", *The Seoul Herald* 2 ptember 2004, quoted in, V. Denisov, "Moscow-Seoul: Partnership Based on Trust", *International Affairs*, p.129

would strictly abide by the Non-Proliferation Treaty, its nuclear activities impeded political settlement in Korean Peninsula.¹¹⁶

As for economic relations between Russia and South Korea, because of political instability and unsuitable legislation in Russia, South Korea could not dare to invest in Russia. Therefore, investment relations between Russia and South Korea have been modest. Trade relations between the two countries have improved. Russia and South Korea signed an agreement on restructuring the Russian debt owed to South Korea in 2003. This agreement has had positive effects to economic cooperation between the two countries.

Energy cooperation between Russia and South Korea has a crucial role in their mutual relations. The South Korean business community and investors took part in implementing several Russian energy projects. Actually, energy cooperation between Russia and South Korea (or Russia and North Korea) is beneficial not only for a solution of energy problems but also for keeping stability and security in the region.

In order to sustain security and stability, military technical cooperation between Russia and South Korea is also crucial and sensitive. As it was mentioned before, Russia wants to keep military balance on the Korean Peninsula. Otherwise, regional security and stability and in consequence Russia's interests might be damaged.

¹¹⁶ V. Denisov, "Moscow-Seoul: Partnership Based on Trust", *International Affairs*, p.129

4.3 Chinese – South Korean Relations

One of the surprising developments in the 1990s was normalization of relations between China and South Korea. Moreover, the dramatic growth in relations between China and South Korea in the post-normalization phase was so dramatic that the United States began to question the future of its alliance relationship with Seoul.¹¹⁷ Their relationship was called as “cooperative partnership” during South Korean President Kim Dae Jung’s visit to China in 1998, and it was upgraded to a “comprehensive cooperative partnership” in 2000 and announced in 2003.¹¹⁸

Some crucial factors caused this astonishing development in relations between China and South Korea. Firstly, rapprochement between the West and the East, starting in the late of 1980s, formed the basis of a political atmosphere for the two countries to improve their bilateral relations. Secondly, China’s participation to the international economic system influenced rapprochement between the two countries. After it started to search for technology, South Korea emerged as a provider together with Japan and the United States. Finally, due to the fact that China started to follow global norms of diplomacy and trade, South Korea became more attractive than North Korea, and China retreated from North Korea.

¹¹⁷ Jae Ho Chung, “China’s Ascendancy and the Korean Peninsula: From Interest Reevaluation to Strategic Realignment?”, *Power Shift: China and Asia’s New Dynamics*, ed. David Shambaugh, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2005, p.152

¹¹⁸Ibid., p.164

Regarding these reasons, it is noteworthy that China's security and foreign policy have been transformed from idealism to pragmatism. China started to be seen as a "system maintainer" or "system exploiter" instead of a "system challenger".¹¹⁹ This situation is an indicator that China's economic growth is the first one in its priority list. Actually, if the Chinese Communist Party fails this target, it will be difficult for them to control widespread social disquiet. As Yongjin Zhang says, "the legitimacy of the Party and the regime no longer depends on its revolutionary credentials, but on its ability to deliver what it promises."¹²⁰ Therefore, China wanted to move to South Korea for its national interests.

China has increased its political and strategic role in the Korean Peninsula. This situation serves best for China's economic benefits. China is aware of North Korea's displeasure about its move toward South Korea. But, it thinks that North Korea can not afford to break its connections with China. Because, North Korea needs military, economic and political support, and now China is its last ally.

In fact, there is no reason for China to leave connection with North Korea. While China was approaching to South Korea, it has kept up high-level contacts with North Korea. Moreover, having good relations with North Korea provides

¹¹⁹ Rosemary Foot in Yongjin Zhang and Greg Austin, eds., "Power and Responsibility in Chinese Foreign Policy", *Canberra: Asia Pacific Press* 2001,p.28, quoted in, Tuva Kahrs, "Regional Security Complex Theory and Chinese Policy towards North Korea", *East Asia*, Vol.21, No.4, Winter 2004, p.70

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, p.262, quoted in, Tuva Kahrs, "Regional Security Complex Theory and Chinese Policy towards North Korea", *East Asia*, Vol.21, No.4, Winter 2004, p.70

China more room to maneuver with South Korea. South Korea is concerned about North Korean nuclear program as well as the United States' decreasing security commitment to the Korean Peninsula. Although China prefers a nuclear-free Korea, South Korean officials have reported that China promised to help denuclearize the peninsula as part of the diplomatic deal.¹²¹

Both China and South Korea have high expectations on economic ties. South Korean high technology and industrial experiences have become a great advantage to China's economic reform. They increased substantially their economic cooperation. There is also strategic consideration behind this cooperation between China and South Korea. Both of them are concerned about Japan's economic and technological strength and political influence in Northeast Asia.

Shared interests are developed in economic relations between China and South Korea during the 1990s, and China has not hesitated in risking confrontations with Seoul over such issues as the repatriation of the North Korean refugees and the Taiwan issue.¹²² In addition, China provided assistance to North Korea to prevent a collapse of its regime. Therefore, China does not want South Korea to participate in the U.S.-led missile defense system.

¹²¹ Hong Liu, "The Sino-South Korean Normalization: A Triangular Explanation", *Asian Survey* Vol:33, No.11, November 1993, p.1087

¹²² Seung-yong Kim, "Russo-Japanese Rivalry Over Korean Buffer at the Beginning of the 20th Century and Its Implications", *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol.16, 2005, p.640

Today, China has a unique role in the resolution of inter-Korean tensions. After Korean unification, China's power will be reduced in the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, most of security experts think that China is the most unwilling to accept Korean reunification as compared with Russia and Japan. If Korean reunification occurs, this new environment will certainly adversely influence China. Actually, from its perspective, alteration of its economic development is unwelcome. Even though the reunification of Korea occurs with a gradual reform, it influences China badly, because reunification helps North Korea to improve its economy and brings it in line with international norms. Furthermore, China is reluctant to see the United States' control over the process of Korean reunification. Therefore, most of the experts believe that China prefers a nuclear weapons-free Korea, although it declares sometimes that it is displeased of the North Korean nuclear experiments.

As for the question whether China does matter to South Korea, bilateral trade has increased extraordinarily. "China already is the second-largest recipient of South Korea's overseas investment, while South Korea marks the seventh-largest destination for China's outbound investment."¹²³ In addition, China has an indispensable diplomatic position in resolving the Korean question. On the other hand, even though China is not considered as a threat militarily, rise of China economically is considered as a threat and an opportunity for South Korea. In sum, China matters to South Korea economically and diplomatically.

¹²³ Jae Ho Chung, "South Korea Between Eagle and Dragon: Perception Ambivalence and Strategic Dilemma", *Asian Survey*, Vol.41, No.5, p.781

Today, one of the main security issues in the world is North Korean nuclear problem. It disquits not only the Northeast Asian countries but also the rest of the world. In the fifth chapter, North Korea's role in the region and its relations with Russia and China will be examined.

CHAPTER 5

RUSSIA, CHINA AND THE ROLE OF NORTH KOREA IN THE NORTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY

As was explained in the previous chapter, after the World War II, Korean Peninsula became officially divided into two parts. It developed two completely different political systems. While South Korea chose liberal democracy, North Korea followed communism. Korean War broke out in 1950 because of North Korea's invasion of the South. The Korean War ended in 1953, but the border, which divides the country into two parts, remained unchanged. So, North Korea started to think that it can reach its aim by having nuclear weapons and got Russia's and China's support in this issue. The first nuclear projects started thanks to Soviet Union's contribution during the Khrushchev era. After Khrushchev, North Korea started to have closer relations with China and retreated from Russia. China helped North Korea to built new nuclear facilities.

Today, the main issue in Northeast Asia lies in the Korean Peninsula. North Korea is one of the places in the focus of world politics because of its nuclear program and its missile tests. North Korea began nuclear research in 1960s, however, it was discovered later that it began developing its own

plutonium nuclear weapons.¹²⁴ This problem started with North Korea's withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1993, to which North Korea acceded in 1989. There isn't any provision that says North Korea must give up its highly enriched uranium reactors once it breaks with the treaty.¹²⁵ Meanwhile, North Korea restarted its frozen nuclear program. Although North Korea had signed the verification agreement with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1985, it evicted inspectors of IAEA from its land. These extraordinary events have alarmed not only other Asian countries but also all over the world. As Donald S. Zagoria says, "North Korea's actions also threaten the integrity of the NPT, the nuclear nonproliferation regime, and if not stopped could encourage other states to develop nuclear weapons."¹²⁶

Nuclear crisis in 1993-94 was resolved by an agreement between North Korea and the United States. This made the United States' role in Korean affairs more important. Japan and South Korea were in cooperation with the United States. China was the only protector of North Korea. However, after China started to have close relations with South Korea, its role changed and became the most effective. As for Russia, it was not as interested as others in resolving the crisis. However, it was interested in keeping stability and peace in the region. Therefore,

¹²⁴ *The North Korean Nuclear Program*, New York, London, 2000, pp.21-37, 127-130, quoted in, Georgii Toloraia, "Korean Peninsula and Russia", *International Affairs*, p.32

¹²⁵ Amitai Etzioni, "Enforcing Nuclear Disarmament", *The National Interest*, Winter 2004/2005, p.87

¹²⁶ Donald S. Zagoria, "East Asian Security Challenges", *American Foreign Policy Interests*, Vol.29, 2007, p.14

it altered policy and decided to become more active in resolution of North Korean nuclear issue.

In the beginning, North Korea used to consider that these nuclear weapons are the only way against South Korea. North Korea developed its military power. Today, North Korea develops its nuclear program in order to use as blackmail to revise its bad economic conditions, but not to annex South Korea. The nuclear crisis would demonstrate that North Korea has been capable of exerting significant pressure on the international community although it is isolated and with a stagnant economy.¹²⁷

In this chapter, North Korean nuclear problem, which is not resolved, will be examined. We see that there are growing concerns and pressure from big powers and regional states. In addition, according to South Korea, this issue is an obstacle to reunification. Countries which oppose North Korean nuclear program started to cooperate and formed the six-party talks. In this process, China's and Russia's roles are especially crucial.

4.1 North Korea's Foreign Policy and the Northeast Asian Security

Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, a balance of relations between the major world powers (the Soviet Union, the United States, China and Japan) was established in the Korean Peninsula. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union,

¹²⁷ Sharif Shuja, "Understanding North Korea's New Nuclear Accord", *Contemporary Review*, p.327

there were growing tensions because of these world powers' purposes to secure for themselves the most favorable conditions of the new status quo. However, Korean Peninsula avoided a military conflict.

The 1993-1994 nuclear crisis was resolved by an agreement between the United States and North Korea. The agreement was on freezing North Korea's indigenous nuclear power plant development centered at the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center, that was suspected of being a step in a nuclear weapons program, in exchange for the construction of two light-water reactors¹²⁸ (LWR) by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO).¹²⁹ KEDO is founded in 1995 by the United States, South Korea, and Japan to implement the 1994 Agreement between North Korea and the United States. This agreement created coordination of policy toward North Korea between South Korea, Japan and the United States, advanced the United States' role in Korean Peninsula and enabled Japan to enhance its interests in the Korean problem.

Instead of the two light-water reactors Russia wanted to implement a project of building a nuclear power plant in the territory of Russia's Primorsky Krai. This nuclear power plant would supply electricity to North Korea. However, this project has not been taken up in concrete terms.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ The light water reactor or LWR is a type of thermal reactor that uses light water H₂O as opposed to heavy water D₂O. Thermal reactors are the most common type of nuclear reactor, and light water reactors use ordinary water as both a moderating material and reactor coolant. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Light_water_reactor)

¹²⁹ Georgii Toloraia, "Korean Peninsula and Russia", *International Affairs*, p.32

¹³⁰ V. Denisov, "Moscow-Seoul: Partnership Based on Trust", *International Affairs*, p.133

The second North Korean nuclear crisis started in 2002. The United States called for complete nuclear disarmament, however North Korea responded by undoing the core vestiges of the 1994 Agreed Framework between the two countries, a bilateral accord that addressed the first phase of the nuclear crisis.¹³¹ Following the second North Korean nuclear crisis, China decided to arrange a trilateral meeting among itself, the United States and North Korea. Because of the fact that the United States did not want to meet bilaterally with North Korea at that time, South Korea, Russia and Japan also participated to the meeting. The first round of the meeting was held in 2003 in Beijing and called the six-party talks.

The future of Korean Peninsula depends on the future of North Korea, its economic difficulties and its security policy for the regional stability. It has a rise in its foreign debt and negative economic growth since 1990.¹³² Under these circumstances, why has North Korea developed its nuclear weapons? In order to strengthen its hand in international negotiations or in order to wipe out its feeling of insecure. Actually, developing nuclear weapons has strengthened North Korea's hand in international negotiations. Regarding the second option, let us glance at its reasons to feel insecure: First of all, there were American troops deployed in South Korea, and South Korea and the United States have had good

¹³¹ John S. Park, "Inside Multilateralism: The Six-Party Talks", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.28, No.4, Autumn 2005, p.76

¹³² Ming Liu, "An Obsessed Task: Prospects, Models, and Impact of Korean Reunification", *East Asia: An International Quarterly*, Vol.17, No.4, 22 December 1999, p.32

relations. Even though the United States deployed nuclear weapons in South Korea and even though the United States claimed that they are removed, it is not officially approved. Second, there were not any Russian or Chinese troops in North Korea, and relations between North Korea and Russia was getting broken. Russia started to have good relations with South Korea and it was refusing to sell arms to North Korea.

North Korea's political culture comes from a revolutionary past and North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Il, is a dictator who has watched two million of his compatriots die of starvation and has imprisoned at least 200,000 others.¹³³ These features of North Korea and its leader, Kim Jong Il, might be another reason of why North Korea has developed its nuclear weapons.

There are three scenarios about the future of North Korea. The first one is North Korea's opening up like China did. According to this scenario, North Korea opens up to the outside world by having a market economy; the second one is North Korea's attack to South Korea; and the last one is collapse of North Korea.¹³⁴ All these scenarios could cause reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

¹³³ Sharif Shuja, "Understanding North Korea's New Nuclear Accord", *Contemporary Review*, p.327

¹³⁴ Thomas H. Buchanan, "The Coming Decade of Change on the Korean Peninsula: Implications For Northeast Asia and the United States", *East Asia*, Winter 1999, p.8

4.2 Russian – North Korean Relations

Relations between Russia and North Korea can be divided into three stages. The first one is from 1991 to 1995. During this period, Russia was putting heavier emphasis on relations with the West. Therefore, it was trying to promote cooperation with South Korea. The second stage is from 1995 to 1999. During these years, Russia shifted its foreign policy and restarted to emphasize its bilateral relations with North Korea. With this policy, Russia aimed at strengthening its influence in the region. At the end of this stage, Russia gained a balanced position between South and North Korea. The last stage is Putin administration. With Putin's pragmatic foreign policy, Russia followed dualist foreign policy of pursuing security and economic interests. In this period, Russia started to seek continued economic cooperation with South Korea and simultaneously pursue its regional strategic interests through improved relations with North Korea.¹³⁵

Until the year 2000, Russia had a passive position on the Korean nuclear crisis. It was supporting all attempts on a peaceful settlement, but indeed, it did not have any effect on the course of events. Russia altered its traditional policy in 2000 and it became the only country to have had a meeting with the North Korean President. This gave Russia the opportunity to become the center of attention of

¹³⁵ Seung Ham Yang, Woosang Kim, and Yongho Kim, "Russo-North Korean Relations in the 2000s", *Asian Survey*, Vol.44, No.6, p.800

the other countries present at the Okinawa summit when discussing the Korean topic.¹³⁶

Russia was excluded from the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) project which was formed to offer North Korea with two-light-water reactors, in return for leaving its nuclear program. Dilemma in relations between North Korea and the United States, North Korea's continuation of possession of nuclear weapons, China's changing Korean policy and having closer relations with South Korea have let Russia have a greater role in the Korean Peninsula. Relations between Russia and North Korea altered with the inauguration of Putin's administration.

Ending of support and democratization process in Russia alienated North Korea and Russia from each other. However, Vladimir Putin's visit to North Korea in 2000 and Kim Jong Il's visits to Russia caused a diplomatic achievement, because, they were steps toward resolving the missile problem in North Korea. Furthermore, the intensive talks between Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Il softened up North Korea's isolation and caused its opening up to the rest of the world.

After this breakthrough, economic relations between Russia and North Korea improved. Endeavors to find solution to North Korea's debt problem continued and efforts got under way to explore possibilities of Russian part in

¹³⁶ Vassily Mikheev, "The Korean Issue in Light of September 11 Events", *Far Eastern Affairs*, Vol.30, No.3, 2002, p.31

rebuilding and modernizing North Korea's enterprises, especially oil refining enterprises, and of participation by Russian business in the North Korea's special economic zone.¹³⁷

A fundamental change in relations between Russia and North Korea was prompted by the 9/11 attacks. The target of the post 9/11 reorientation of the United States' policy has also included removal of weapons of mass destruction of North Korea. Following 9/11 attacks, Putin was the first world leader to state that Russia is ready to cooperate with the United States in a war against international terrorism. As Seung Ham Yang, Woosang Kim, and Yongho Kim expressed, "Putin's foreign policy after 9/11 was not a shift; rather, it represented his pragmatic posture."¹³⁸ Putin's cooperative approach does not mean that Russia would leave its security interests in the region. After the war against Iraq, with the anti-Americanism thoughts, Putin tried to improve its diplomatic relations with North Korea. Russia regained its influential position as a regional actor when it participated in the six-party talks in 2003.

It is clear that Russia wants all problems that arise in the Korean Peninsula, including North Korean nuclear program, should be resolved in peace. Putin's foreign policy toward North Korea is economy-oriented. However, it also satisfies Russia's security interests.

¹³⁷ Georgii Toloraia, "Korean Peninsula and Russia", *International Affairs*, p.28

¹³⁸ Seung Ham Yang, Woosang Kim, and Yongho Kim, "Russo-North Korean Relations in the 2000s", *Asian Survey*, Vol.44, No.6, p.805

Russia's priorities in the Korean Peninsula are keeping the stability and the status quo. It does not want North Korea to be isolated. Russia's current wish about North Korea is a peaceful reunification with South Korea. This brings a prosperous neighbor to Russia. Therefore, Russia is absolutely behind Korea's reconciliation. Russia's role in this process is limited to favorable support in order to achieve compromise between North and South Korea, stronger security on the peninsula, multilateral cooperation in accordance with the global trends toward internationalization of economic affairs.¹³⁹

In spite of the North Korean on-going nuclear crisis, Russia keeps going to seek economic opportunities in Northeast Asia by following mercantilist policy. Although the six party talks¹⁴⁰ could not move along, this situation did not interfere with Russia's pipeline and railway deals. "In October 2004, Moscow disclosed a North Korean-Russian deal to link the Trans-Siberian Railroad with Rajin, a port in northeastern North Korea."¹⁴¹ This shows that Russia did not freeze its North Korean policy, while other countries did.

¹³⁹ Georgii Toloraia, "Korean Peninsula and Russia", *International Affairs*, p.27

¹⁴⁰ The six-party talks were a result of North Korea withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003. These talks target to find a peaceful resolution to the problem of the North Korean nuclear weapons program. Six countries, which are China, South Korea, North Korea, the United States, Russia and Japan, have been in a number of meetings.

¹⁴¹ Kim Ki-chan, "Russia, North Develop Plan for Railroad Link", *JoongAng Daily*, 11 October 2004, quoted in, John S. Park, "Inside Multilateralism: The Six-Party Talks", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.28, No.4, Autumn 2005, p.87

4.3 Chinese – North Korean Relations

China used to be considered as the “big brother” of North Korea. Therefore, China’s role in the nuclear program of North Korea is very important. The first question is whether China has influence on North Korea. While some experts claim that China’s influence on North Korea is less than imagined, the others think that China is the only country which could affect North Korea. When Korean Peninsula is under external control, China’s heartland is threatened. Therefore, China’s interests face a serious challenge in dealing with North Korea.

Relations between the two countries include geographical proximity and historical linkage. China and North Korea share a border of approximately 1350 kilometers as neighbours. China offered military assistance to the North Korean People during the Korean War. As Ming Liu says, “The establishment of this protective relationship was based on the shared socialist ideology and international revolutionary struggle against the imperialist threat namely the US”¹⁴²

Today, China’s policy toward the North Korean nuclear program is clear. A nuclear-free Korea is favourable for China because of regional stability. This is a dilemma for it. Actually, it does not want collapse of the North Korean regime to keep the Korean Peninsula nuclear-free. According to China, a nuclear-free Korea prevents armed conflict in the region.

¹⁴² Ming Liu, “China and the North Korean Crisis: Facing Test and Transition”, *Pacific Affairs*, Fall 2003, Vol.76, No.3, p.348

China has started a new era of bilateral relations with the United States after 9/11 attacks. They have been in cooperation in the war on terror. With this situation, China possesses a balanced position between North Korea and the United States. Therefore, China has considerably departed from its traditionally low-profile diplomacy in the Korean peninsula with a clear message that North Korea must put an end to its nuclear weapons program.¹⁴³ What could be the reason of this message while China wants a nuclear-free Korea? Actually, after China's opening out, North Korea started to feel isolated. Russia altered its policy and decided to have close relations with both of the Koreas. In this process, North Korea moved away from China. Therefore, China might think that North Korea's nuclear program could undermine stability in the region and China's economic growth could be adversely affected by this situation. This became another reason for China to have more active diplomacy.

Today, China has brought off the most successful economic reforms in the twentieth century. With this success, it has become an economic giant and international power. China's policy in the peninsula was shaped by aims such as long term stability, border security, preventing the development of nuclear proliferation, supporting softening relations between North Korea and South Korea, economic cooperation and the responsibilities of China as an internationally powerful country in dealing with external issues. In addition, its

¹⁴³ Anne Wu, "What China Whispers to North Korea", *The Washington Quarterly* Vol.28, No.2, Spring 2005, p.36

strategy on North Korea has considerably altered because of China's profound integration into world issues over the past thirty years. China extremely values its improving relations with South Korea.

Normalization of the relations between China and South Korea caused tension between the two countries. North Korea's economic problems became a long-term headache for China.¹⁴⁴ China reduces its aid to North Korea, while it keeps pace with globalization. Therefore, links between China and North Korea have been damaged. The two countries' divergent economic philosophy and diplomatic policy certainly made it difficult for China to play its traditional role as socialist ally.¹⁴⁵

Korean Nuclear Program is a big problem for China to have stable relations with the United States and to follow a strong foreign policy in the world. Therefore, China decided to work to relieve the North Korean nuclear crisis more actively. The first thing China did was to criticize North Korea's withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Moreover, China sought to bring it back to the six-part talks, thus far with little success.¹⁴⁶

One of the noticeable issues between the two countries is refugees, who have come into China from North Korea since 1995. Poverty and starvation

¹⁴⁴ Ming Liu, "China and the North Korean Crisis: Facing Test and Transition", *Pacific Affairs*, Fall 2003, Vol.76, No.3, p.366

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.372

¹⁴⁶ Robert A. Scalapino, "In Search of Peace and Stability in the Region Surrounding the Korean Peninsula-Challenges and Opportunities", *American Foreign Policy Interests*, Vol.28, 2006, p.372

increased in North Korea in the second half of 1990s. People started to seek jobs and food in China.

According to the estimate of a local Chinese official in December of 2001, there were some 3,000 North Korean refugees in Jilin province. This figure is evidently a low estimate, which is contradicted by a widely accepted figure of 20,000 to 30,000. In addition to figures provided by the Chinese government, there are other data, which range from tens of thousands to 200,000 or 300,000.¹⁴⁷

These North Korean refugees in China suffered in bad conditions due to their illegal status. South Korea offered a solution which is a participation in a joint investigation with the United Nations. According to this solution, the United Nations was going to set up refugee camps along the common border between the North Korea and China in order to accommodate the refugees. However, China did not accept South Korean solution for this issue. As for China, this is an internal affair for North Korea and it can be resolved by China and North Korea. Despite China's opposition to intervention of the United Nations, China let South Korea provide food assistance to the North Korean refugees.

North Koreans sought refuge in the Spanish Embassy, Japanese Consulate, South Korean Consulate and American Consulate in China in 2002. These events altered refugee problem and caused a diplomatic argument between China, Japan and South Korea. China strengthened security measures in some embassies and consulates. A number of foreign NGOs intervened in this issue. Therefore, Chinese government warned them to abide by Chinese laws and regulations.

¹⁴⁷ Ming Liu, "China and the North Korean Crisis: Facing Test and Transition", *Pacific Affairs*, Fall 2003, Vol.76, No.3, p.352

Actually, China does not want the collapse of North Korea, because this situation galvanizes hundreds of thousands of refugees to come into its own territory. Furthermore, for the same reason, China does not want another conflict in the Korean Peninsula, either. Consequently, it is obvious that China's priority is its economic development. In order to achieve this target, a peaceful and stable international environment is necessary. Therefore, China seeks a peaceful resolution in the Korean Peninsula. According to China, the preferable scenario in North Korea is gradual reform; not so major as to deteriorate the ruling regime, but enough to improve North Korea's economy and bring the country in line with international norms.¹⁴⁸ In this process, China has become the most crucial actor because of its economic interactions and newly established close relations with South Korea.

¹⁴⁸ Tuva Kahrs, "Regional Security Complex Theory and Chinese Policy towards North Korea", *East Asia*, Vol.21, No.4, Winter 2004, p.68

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Over the last few years, relationship between Russia and China has improved notably. We are in a time when this partnership between the two countries is flourishing as never before. They are ready to say that they have already forgotten old antagonisms. Regarding post-Cold War realities and future opportunities, they have strengthened their cooperation in several fields.

The collapse of the Soviet Union became the beginning of the Russian-Chinese relations of today. After 1991, both of the states indicated their willingness to develop bilateral relations. They have a long common border and changeable historical relations. While Russia was following the “one China” policy about Taiwan issue, China supported Russia during Chechnya War in between 1994-1996. Russia also backs China on Tibet and Xinjiang issues.

Russia and China also made significant progress in some areas in which their cooperation was previously weak. Military cooperation can be considered as one of these areas, however the Peace Mission joint exercises in 2005 and 2007 demonstrated that the two countries developed their relations in military cooperation, too. Russia and China have intended to build a strategic partnership since 1996. Both of them want to adapt their economies to the challenges of competing with the rest of the world. Economic cooperation between them,

especially trade relations, has increased impressively. Today, China is the second largest trading partner of Russia after the Europe Union. Economic relations between Russia and China are dominated by trade. Taking into consideration foreign trade between Russia and China in general, we see that there is a great congruity between the two countries. Because, Russia needs consumer goods, and today China is one of the biggest producer countries in the world. In addition, China has a growing need for natural resources, and Russia is the biggest supplier of natural gas. Russia exports technology, defense goods and energy to China. China provides consumer and agricultural products to Russia. Russian supply of weapons is essential for China.

It is obvious that China and Russia need each other economically, militarily and politically. So, they have supported each other in these fields and have had cooperation. They have also deepened their cooperation in other fields such as education, technology, culture, tourism, sports. On the other hand, Russia has a fear of changing balance in favor of China. This changing balance might put a limit on the duration of the strategic partnership. However it does not decrease this partnership's importance in world politics and international area.

China and Russia restored its relations with themselves, Japan, North Korea and South Korea regardless of historical hostility and differences of political and ideological systems. This multidirectional foreign policy has served three purposes: (1) Maintaining a peaceful external environment for Russian interests and a necessary precondition for Chinese modernization; (2) convincing

the world at large that China and Russia are big powers which can influence the international community; and (3) minimizing international shocks that could promote internal political instability of each country.

China, Russia and Japan are important in terms of security of the Northeast Asia, because, both China and Russia are considered as huge continental land powers and Japan is seen as a maritime power. During the post-Cold War era, the security environment in the Northeast Asia changed substantially. Considering security of the Northeast Asia, Japan's economic power, military capacity, technological capability and diplomatic effect have become extremely crucial. Even though Japan has a strong military structure, it has an anti-militarism and nonaggression policy. However, owing to the fact that relations between Japan and the United States lost its importance after the collapse of the Soviet Union and increasing military threats caused a big concern in Japan, it decided to change its military policy.

Regarding relations with Russia and Japan, we can say that they lost many opportunities to develop their relations in the post-Cold War Era although the end of the Cold War was a strong expectation for them to normalize their relations. They have complementary economic needs. Japan needs energy resources and Russia is a rich storehouse of natural resources. For Russia, the major benefit of improved relations with Japan is Japanese investment in its devastated economy. Furthermore, rising of Chinese power besieges both of the countries.

The main incoherence between the two countries is a dispute over the Kuril Islands. After the post-Cold War era started, Russia and Japan realized their need for each other more, but conditions were not appropriate for vital action because of the issue of the Kuril Islands. Resolution of the Kuril Islands issue has been a precondition for Japan to sign a peace treaty with Russia. Russia tried to solve the problems by giving back two of the islands. However, later on, although it was crucial for Russia to get economic assistance from Japan, it stated its opposition to returning the Kuril Islands to Japan. Japan's dissatisfaction about the return of only two islands and changing international environment after the 9/11 attacks in the United States are the reasons of Russia's this decision. Following the 9/11 attacks Russia declared that it supported the United States against international terrorism. This declaration indicated that relations between the two countries were getting better. On the other hand, Japan's relations with China and South Korea were not great. In addition, after the post-Cold War era, importance of relations between Japan and the United States has been relatively decreased. In this environment, Russia decided not to give any of the islands to Japan.

According to Chinese people Japan is the most emotional issue. Relations between China and Japan have been influenced by some crucial issues such as territorial disputes, nationalism, the rapid rise of China's military power, Taiwan's political status and the United States-Japan security alliance. Mutual unpleasant history of Japan and China plays an important role in relations between them. However, they have reasons to approach each other. Japan considers rising China

as a threat, so it wants to have close relations with it. As to China, Japan has a crucial role in Chinese economic transformation and Westernization process.

As for the Korean Peninsula, there is an unstable situation in the region. South and North Korea are geopolitically and strategically crucial for major powers. In the future, the process of the reunification of both Korea will change the status quo in this region. The future of the Korean Peninsula depends on how to solve the Korean question. The possibility of Korean reunification does not seem to occur in near future. There are many critical uncertainties and predetermined elements as obstacles for the reunification.

With regard to South Korean relations with Russia and China, although South Korea tried to persuade Russia to uphold its own side after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia preferred to follow a balanced policy on the Korean Peninsula. Today, political dialogue and foreign policy interaction between Russia and South Korea considerably increased. However, Russia has played its role pragmatically in the Korean issue and tried not to damage its benefits on either Korean state. As to China, developments in relations between China and South Korea in 1990s were unforeseen. Chinese economic transformation and the new political atmosphere of the post-Cold War became the main reasons of normalization of the two countries' relations. Actually, having close relations with South Korea and at the same time with North Korea increased Chinese political and strategic role in the Korean Peninsula.

In addition to unstable situation in the Korean Peninsula, the North Korean program of creating nuclear weapon attracted world's attention. Today, the main issue about North Korea is its totalitarian political regime and nuclear threat. As it was mentioned before, in the beginning, North Korea was using these nuclear weapons against South Korea. Today, it develops its nuclear program in order to use as a blackmail mechanism, basically in order to revive its bad economic conditions, but not to annex South Korea.

In sum, Northeast Asia is a region where both economic dynamism and power conflicts are intensely observed. In the post-Cold War era, Northeast Asian countries act pragmatically instead of ideologically. In this time, it is supposed that they bring to light old antagonisms and conflicts which they blanketed in the Cold War era and follow policies according to this. Historical antagonisms certainly present an obstacle for developing close relations with each other. However, during the post-Cold War era, the Northeast Asian countries' priority policy is standing up for their own profits. That is to say, in the post-Cold War era, it is clearly observed that countries in the region started to follow pragmatic policies in order to achieve their goals regardless their ideological differences. China's and Russia's improving relations with each other and with South Korea and Japan are the best examples of this situation. In order to attain their objects, they cooperate with each other, but do not choose to conflict as a way to achieve their purposes. In this context, we can say that, in the post-Soviet world, there are substantial changes in the regional countries' foreign policies. Their main aim is

to have a peaceful condition to reach their targets and find resolution for some critical security issues such as North Korean nuclear program, Taiwan issue or reunification question of the two Koreas.

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